

2010 World Service Conference Summary

Also available on the Members' site at www.al-anon.alateen.org/members

Celebrate!

**Embrace the
group conscience
to expand
our circle of hope**

—50 years of the World Service Conference

Célébrons! ¡Celebremos!

**Intégrons la conscience de groupe afin d'élargir notre cercle d'espoir
Acojamos la conciencia de grupo para ampliar nuestro círculo de esperanza**

—Les 50 ans de la Conférence des Service Mondiaux.

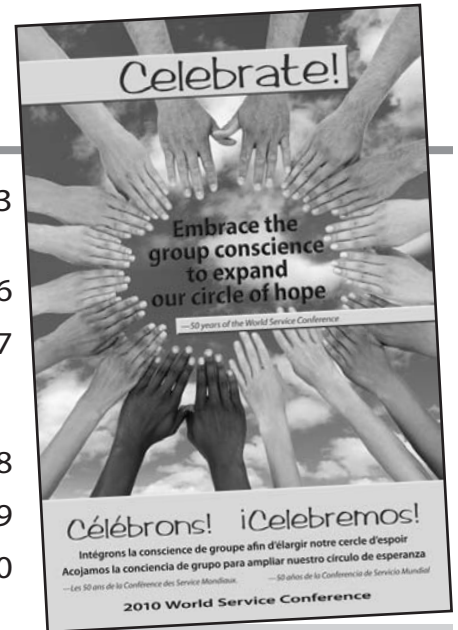
—50 años de la Conferencia de Servicio Mundial

2010 World Service Conference

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

2010 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

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**“Our World
Service
Conference (WSC)
is the active voice
and the effective
group conscience
of our society in
world affairs.”**

*2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen
Service Manual
(P-24/27), page 170*

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Headquarters, Inc. 2010

Concept Two

The Al-Anon Family Groups have delegated complete administrative and operational authority to their Conference and its service arms.

**Al-Anon
Family Group
Headquarters, Inc.**

Board Vision

Statement:

All people affected by someone else's drinking will find help and recovery in every community.

Board Mission

Statement:

Anticipate the future and Al-Anon's place in it and ensure that the necessary resources are available.

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—50 years of the World Service Conference

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—Les 50 ans de la Conférence des Service Mondiaux.

—50 años de la Conferencia de Servicio Mundial

SELECTED COMMITTEES, WORK GROUPS, THOUGHT FORCES, AND TASK FORCES

Mary Ann R.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The day before the 2010 Conference convened, the Chairperson of the Board reviewed the roles of the members of Committees, Work Groups, Thought Forces, and Task Forces with all Conference members.

She began, “To assist you in your work, I’d like to clarify the role of Conference members as it pertains to participation in these groups and to provide some hints that could assist in your preparation for the meeting.

“Tradition One states that: ‘Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.’ When working in a group setting, I believe that unity is more easily achieved when we understand our roles and have a common understanding of our goals.

“Let’s look at the definitions of these four units, which the Board uses to better define our responsibilities when working in these capacities.

“A Committee is an originating body and is often considered a permanent part of an organization. A Thought Force or Task Force may evolve from a Committee. The Selected Committees are Committees of the Board of Trustees; they were formed to respond to an ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups. While a Committee does not manage or conduct the active affairs of the service department it is related to, a Committee may make recommendations about any work the service department is doing or considering.

“A Work Group may also be an originating body out of which a Thought or Task Force can originate. A Work Group may be formed to respond to a current ongoing need of Al-Anon Family Groups and may make recommendations resulting from any work it is doing or considering.

“A Thought Force is a temporary unit of people established to brainstorm ideas and to develop strategies on a single defined task or activity. A Thought Force uses the resources available, such as members of the Thought Force; other Conference members, including staff; and other Al-Anon members. A problem identified, for example, could be a lack of clarity regarding roles. Strategies could include writing job descriptions (the idea, not the actual job description); components of a guideline; or adding text to a portion of the *Service Manual* for clarity. The objective is to identify the potential idea, not to write the actual text itself.

“If there are facts that are unknown, they can be flagged in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions under ‘Things we don’t know but wish we did.’ The Thought Force is not expected to have all the answers or to provide the final solutions. A Thought Force may lay the foundation for the work of a Task Force. Sometimes a Thought Force offers recommendations resulting from its findings. ‘They are thinkers, not doers.’

“A Task Force is a temporary unit of people established to work on a single, defined task or activity. A Task Force may fulfill the recommendations made by a Thought Force. Members of a Task Force are the ‘doers.’

“None of these groups is a decision-making body; however, these groups may make recommendations to their originating body.

“Who are the members of Committees, Work Groups, and the Thought and Task Forces?

“For the purposes of today’s discussion, all members of the WSC. Committees and Work Groups may also have at-Large members who are not present today. The Thought and Task Forces of the Conference are comprised of Conference members only, unless a Delegate member was outgoing at the prior year’s end and remained on the Force to complete the work.



“What are the roles and responsibilities of the Committee, Work Groups, and the Thought and Task Forces?”

- Everyone’s role is the same, with the exception of the Chairperson, who has additional responsibilities. All are participating members of the group with staff, Trustees, and Delegates each bringing a different perspective.
- Be sure that all members understand the assignment or charge.
- Why has this task been assigned?
- What are the members meant to accomplish?
- What information do the members need?
- Ask questions for clarity, if at any time the members don’t understand.
- Do some brainstorming.
- At any time, if the members don’t understand something, ask for clarity.
- Stay on course and do not put your own interpretation on the charge.
- Say, ‘I think we’re off track,’ if the conversations wanders.
- Be prepared to work on the charge outside the Conference.
- Be willing to volunteer for specific activities related to the fulfillment of the charge.
- Respond to the Chairperson in a timely manner, and if unable to complete a task or to be available on a given date, let the Chairperson know.
- Be able to accept constructive criticism when the project is up for review.
- Share your work with each other.
- Chairperson
 - Builds the agenda—a plan of action
 - Reviews the agenda with the group and asks for agreement to follow the agenda.
 - Sets ground rules for discussion
 - Has the group agree on the outcome
 - Sets up meeting times, dates, methods of communication, and the tentative purpose of each meeting
 - Helps the group maintain a sense of unity
 - Gives everyone a voice
 - Allows a few minutes for venting, if needed
 - Sees that the job is done correctly.
- Recorder (A member selected from within the group)
 - Writes down key ideas and other information
 - Asks for clarity, when needed

“Everyone in the group is an equal member. Your ideas and input are valued. Your positive attitude and encouragement of each other can be a wonderful learning experience from which you may build upon in your future endeavors. This is a perfect opportunity to see our Al-Anon principles in action.

“Please remember that everything we do is for Al-Anon Family Groups and we do not claim individual ownership for anything that we create.”

2010 ASSIGNMENTS FOR SELECTED COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES, THOUGHT FORCES, AND WORK GROUPS

Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and World Service Conference staff members comprise the Selected Committees, Task Forces, Thought Forces, and Work Groups. Below are the Delegate assignments for this year's Conference.

Assignment	Panel 48 (2008-2010)	Panel 49 (2009-2011)	Panel 50 (2010-2012)
Conference Committee on Trustees	Marcia B., NY (S) Leona W., ON (N)	Terry F., FL(N) Theresa D., IN Rosie M., TX(E)	Patsy A., NC/BDA Cindy C., MT Phyllis M., VA John P., MA
Literature Committee	Cindy H., AR Judy S., SD	Sandra F., OH Christine F., PA Linda S., FL(S)	Cecilia K., AZ Jocelyne L., QC(E) Jane S., OK
Public Outreach Committee	Clif B., LA Marcy M., IL(S) Gina R., CT	Debbie K., MI John S., CA(N)	Connie B., ND Vicki L., GA Shirley T., BC/YK
Task Force to create a process for Conference members to submit items for the WSC agenda	Kerri K., NE Norma D., UT Esther M., PR	Connie D., DE Louise R., MB	Daphne F., MS Marti S., WV
Thought Force for Areas to show how service contributes to growth and is an integral part of the Al-Anon program	Judy K., NV Chris M., NM	Charla C., KS Cindy H., TN Meagan M., MN(S)	Paul G., NJ Elaine L., MN(N) Jeannette M., MP
Thought Force on how to include dual members in service work while maintaining our policies	Melissa F., ME Sharon B., AK Barb L., SK	Elaine R., NY(N) Kay R., HI Charlie S., MD/DC	Cheryl A., WI Bette R., OR
Thought Force to identify information for a guideline on memorial contributions	Judy G., WY Linda R., SC	Ramona C., IL(N) Claire D., ON(S) Cindy K., TX(W)	Jane H., AB/NWT Anne S., VT
Thought Force to support Areas in dealing with groups whose activities fail to consider Al-Anon or Alateen as a whole	Richard B., MO Dotty B., NH	Micheline B., QC(W) Sandie E., CA(S) Linda M., KY Lorraine R., IA	Vickie C., AL Magdalena E., WA Teri M., CO

SHARING AREA HIGHLIGHTS

2010 World Service Conference
HOT TOPIC

World Service Delegate ... The World Service Delegate shares Area experience at their annual Conventions, which serve Al-Anon members. He brings the vision and the spirit of worldwide Al-Anon back to his Area. (Page 126, 2009-2010 Service Manual)

Date: _____

Topic: _____

This topic is:

- ☐ High priority/depth at Assembly and in Area newsletter
- ☐ Report outcome only
- ☐ Report if time allows

Frame the topic for my Assembly:

Main points to tell my Assembly:

What was the outcome/conclusion?

The total amount of time for my Delegate report is _____ minutes on this topic during my Delegate report.
I plan to spend _____ minutes on this topic during my Delegate report. Report Sequence _____

Prior to the opening of the World Service Conference (WSC), a session was held for the Delegates to discuss successes and concerns in the Areas. All other Conference attendees were invited to attend as guests, with no voice. This year's Chairperson, Norma D., Panel 48, Utah, had asked each Area Delegate to submit one success/highlight and one issue/concern in advance of the session to the Recorder, Judy K., Panel 48, Nevada.

During the session, Delegates shared their previously submitted successes, highlights, issues, and concerns.

Area successes/highlights included using Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM); planning for a TEAM event; planning and implementing an Assembly apart from A.A.; experiencing growth in Web site use; keeping up with technology (some Areas going paperless); establishing goals for Assembly; revitalizing Alateen; implementing Work Groups and Thought/Task Forces; using "Hot Topic" sheets; digitizing archives; holding introductory meetings in institutions; renting an electronic billboard for Public Outreach; incorporating as a non-profit; using conference calls to meet; updating Area guidelines and by-laws; establishing an orientation for new Group Representatives (GR); redistricting; centralizing the location of Area Assemblies and AWSC meetings; using the World Service Conference theme in the Area; using the Area's members' Web site for posting newsletters and meeting minutes; using the Area Web site for Public Outreach; accepting the group conscience; outsourcing of background checks for Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) certification; hosting a WSO Trustee or staff member at the Area Assembly; and hosting the Alateen Advisory Committee.

Some Areas reported success and others reported concern regarding utilizing Action Committees; reaching Spanish-speaking members; reaching younger members; unseating an Area Officer or Coordinator who wasn't performing the job; communicating "What is Conference Approved Literature (CAL)" and "What is not CAL"; handling of Area money; and reaching and attracting families of A.A. members.

Area issues and concerns included the lack of District Representatives (DR); dilution of the program by dual members; presence of pyramid sponsorship; lack of members at Alateen meetings; vacant Area Coordinator positions; correct use of anonymity in electronic communication and when engaging in public outreach; the struggle of Officers/Coordinators to fulfill their service roles, lack of participation in Area conventions; the challenge of reaching members and potential members in remote locales; the cost of holding Assembly and Area World Service Committee meetings; lack of transition between panels; low percentage of group representation at Assembly; and the lack of good personal leadership.

Before the session ended, Ramona C., Panel 49, Illinois North, was elected the Chairperson for the Sharing Area Highlights session in 2011, and Christine F., Panel 49, Pennsylvania, was elected to serve as Recorder.

OPENING DINNER

Bev A.

Conference Co-Chairperson

Prior to the official opening of the Conference, Conference members, International Representatives, and special guests attended an opening dinner. The Co-Chairperson of the Conference opened with the theme: *“Celebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—50 years of the World Service Conference.”* She asked all attendees to remember our pioneers as we celebrated our 50th WSC.

In celebration of Al-Anon’s 50th World Service Conference (WSC), Conference members received a commemorative pen. A cake was wheeled into the dining room and all Conference members joined in singing “Happy Birthday” to the WSC. The Executive Director’s opening remarks regarding the 50th WSC included reading the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome that members use in Al-Anon and Alateen meetings around the world.

Three Conference members recited the Serenity Prayer, in English, French, and Spanish, representing the WSO’s trilingual service structure.

During dinner, returning Conference members were asked to discuss with members at their tables the one word that described how it felt to embrace the Legacies at last year’s WSC: harmonious, unifying, affirming, goodwill, impressive, exciting, spiritually-empowered, humbling, inspired, enlightened, willing, appreciative, fantastic, and healthy.

All Conference members were then asked to describe in one word how it feels to be here this year celebrating, embracing the group conscience, and expanding our circle of hope: energized, exhilarating, joyful, gratitude, connected, fulfilled anticipation, contemplative, free, awesome, blessed, privileged, honored, and comfortable.

The Conference Chairperson then invited the Conference Mentors to “pin” the new Panel 50 Delegates. Each first-time Conference attendee received a 2010 WSC pin.

This year, Claire R., Associate Director of Communications—Professionals, was the spiritual speaker for the opening dinner. (See page 73 for her talk.)

The Conference Co-Chair read a brief excerpt from *As We Understood*, page 26, before closing with the Al-Anon Declaration.



CONFERENCE THEME AND OPENING REMARKS

Carol V.

Conference Chairperson, Trustee

Bev A.

Conference Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Suzanne M.

Associate Director of

Membership Outreach—Conference

The 2010 Conference theme, “Celebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—50 years of the World Service Conference,” laid the foundation for the spiritual tone of this year’s World Service Conference. The theme encouraged members to embrace the group conscience by presuming goodwill in order to ensure the future of Al-Anon Family Groups. The ideas in this year’s theme led to thoughtful discussion, creative thinking, and focused decision-making throughout the 50th World Service Conference (WSC), held at the Wyndham Virginia Beach Resort Hotel in Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 11-15.

This year’s Conference was opened by the Conference Chairperson, with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. She continued her greeting:

“When the Conference Leadership Team started to brainstorm ideas for the 2010 World Service Conference (WSC) theme, we were, of course, excited that this was the 50th WSC and we wanted to celebrate that fact. Therefore, the Team unanimously agreed on the theme, ‘Celebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—50 years of the World Service Conference.’

“Celebrate means to mark the occasion by showing happiness. Embrace means to adopt something, especially a belief or way of life and to welcome and include. Expand means to become or make something become larger in size, scope, or extent, or greater in number or amount.

“As the definitions say, this year marks the occasion of the WSC by showing happiness, adopting a belief in our group conscience, and making our fellowship larger. What more terrific feeling can one have than to celebrate 50 years of the Al-Anon World Service Conference! We invite you to celebrate, embrace our group conscience, and expand our circle of hope.”

The Chairperson continued her opening message with two excerpts from the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*:

“The World Service Conference makes the group conscience available and effective for all Al-Anon. It is the practical means by which the group conscience can speak; it is the voice of world Al-Anon and the guarantee that our world services shall continue to carry on under all conditions.

“The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown; it makes for unity and enables our fellowship to act *as a whole* upon important matters. This makes it the principal guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateen’s harmony and survival. . . .”

(Page 125, *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*)

“Al-Anon has followed A.A.’s path from the beginning, using its principles and adapting its service structure to our own needs. A.A. had found that the group conscience of its fellowship as a whole could best be heard through the establishment of a conference of delegates representing all sections of the continent and meeting yearly with the Board of Trustees and the General Service staff. . . .

“By 1961, Al-Anon had agreed that its group conscience should have the same means of being guided in the performance of its services worldwide.”

(Page 126, *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*)

Then the Chairperson stated that Concept Two tells us on page 169 of the *Service Manual*, “The many Al-Anon groups scattered all over the world hold in their hands the group conscience.’ These groups, including your group back home as well as mine, have ‘delegated complete administrative and operational authority to the World Service Conference and its service arms.’

“Also from Concept Two on page 170 of the *Service Manual*: ‘Our World Service Conference (WSC) is the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs.’ This year’s 50th World Service Conference body—each and every one of us, occupying a seat at this World Service Conference—will be taking actual and spiritual responsibility for our world services.

“Throughout this week, we, as trusted servants, will work together to expand our circle of hope in order to ensure the future of Al-Anon Family Groups.

“Some of us may feel a little nervous about this big responsibility. Let me share with you what the 2009 Conference Chairperson shared in her opening remarks last year: ‘Everyone in this room wants you to be a success.’

“So today, I say to all of you, ‘Everyone in this room wants you to also be a success!’ We are going to work together, we are going to presume goodwill, we are going to have fun, and we are going to celebrate Al-Anon.

“Are you ready to celebrate? Are you excited about what we can accomplish this year? Let’s get this group conscience started.”

With a rap of a gavel, the Conference Chairperson announced, “I now formally open the 2010 World Service Conference!”

After the official opening of the Conference, the first order of business was approval of a motion brought forth by the Conference Leadership Team to seat certain people who could provide critical information to the Conference, representatives from other structures, a consultant on cultural competency, a guest from A.A., as well as staff members who attended for one day as part of their ongoing training.

The following persons were seated:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach

*Director of Business Services
Non-Al-Anon member*

Peter A.

*International Representative—New Zealand
Al-Anon member*

María Del Carmen T.

*International Representative—Mexico
Al-Anon Member*

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

Linda B.

*Chairperson, Executive Committee for Real Property Management
Al-Anon Member*

With voice limited to Cultural Competency, but no vote:

John Colon

*Center for Culturally Competent Education and Training
Non-Al-Anon Member*

With no voice and no vote:

Nicolette Stephens

*Information Analyst
Non-Al-Anon Member*

EI N.

*Southeast Regional Trustee for A.A.
Non-Al-Anon Member*

That the following WSO staff be seated as part of their ongoing training at the 2010 World Service Conference for one day each, **with no voice and no vote:**

Julie M.

*Communications Manager
Al-Anon Member*

Joe T.

*Archives Coordinator
Al-Anon Member*



The motion carried by consensus. (See WSC Motion #1, page 83.)

WELCOME FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

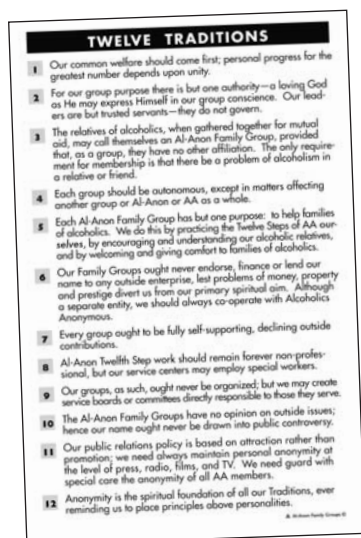
Mary Ann R.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

“On behalf of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., it is a pleasure to welcome you to the 50th World Service Conference. Our theme this year is ‘Celebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—50 years of the World Service Conference.’

“What did you think when you first realized that this was our 50th World Service Conference?

“When you looked at the theme and it said, ‘Celebrate,’ what came across your mind? Does it mean that we can enjoy the recovery that the Al-Anon program has given us? Did you feel uplifted, rewarded, eager to serve, and privileged to be a part of this 50th World Service Conference? Does the word, ‘Celebrate,’ lift that veil of seriousness that so many of us wear? Does it remind us that we are all success stories? Just one little word can generate many questions. That’s how it works in Al-Anon!



“Let’s look at the rest of the theme: ‘Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope.’ When Bill W. was asked to give the opening remarks at the first World Service Conference in 1961, he began with: ‘Now comes the time when Al-Anon must function as a whole . . . you are now applying Tradition Two to Al-Anon as a whole.’ He further stated that each one of these yearly meetings could guarantee the future unity and functioning of our society.

“What is the group conscience and how does it work? It’s knowing everyone’s opinion counts; no one person has authority; we can agree to disagree; we all have a right and duty to participate; and we will agree to accept the group conscience. Tradition Two reminds us that ‘For our group purpose there is but one authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.’

“I challenge all of us present this week to think about the future unity of Al-Anon in all of the discussions and proceedings. Remember that our spiritual strength comes from our informed group conscience.

“Let’s celebrate, embrace our group conscience, and bring hope wherever we go! Have a wonderful Conference!”

The Chairperson of the Board then concluded her welcoming remarks by reading the Twelve Traditions.

ORIENTATION

Mary Ann R.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Goal #1

Conference members will understand the purpose of the Conference, relationships within the structure, and be able to articulate Conference decisions.

Goal #2

The spiritual tone of the World Service Conference will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members.

Goal #3

Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will presume goodwill.

The Chairperson of the Board began the session by saying, “In 1987, I attended the World Service Conference (WSC) as a first-year Delegate, Panel 27, Connecticut. At that time, I never envisioned myself standing here today as a World Service Office Trustee, let alone Chairperson of the Board. This is where my Higher Power and service experience as a Conference member has led me.

“I recall that the highlight of that first day at Conference was meeting Lois W., Al-Anon’s beloved cofounder. She was welcomed at the opening dinner with a standing ovation. Humbly urging everyone to sit down, Lois said, ‘Anybody can start something, but carrying it out is the real challenge. And all the rest of you are doing that job—carrying the message.’

“Lois knew that over time carrying the Al-Anon message would present its challenges. She stated that we were all founders in our own right. She, in her wisdom, anticipated that we would experience change and that we would need to be creative in finding ways to deliver our message of recovery. I like to think that she was giving us permission to carry on and to make our own decisions.

“Sharing the joy of recovery and service in today’s environment is a refreshing and enlightening experience as we work together as staff, Trustees, Executive Committee, and Delegate members of the WSC. I am continually impressed with the knowledge that all of you bring to the Conference, along with your dedication and willingness to make a difference in the lives of those affected by the disease of alcoholism.

“If we could capture the feeling of hope, love, energy, and enthusiasm that fills this room and dispense it to all in need, what a wonderful world it would be!

“This week as we work together, let us strive to agree on what we wish to accomplish, and to maintain clarity and flexibility in that process.

“Because of our sense of community, let us also enjoy our time together as we celebrate 50 years of the WSC and embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope.

“Let us pray for the guidance of our Higher Power as we seek to practice our Al-Anon principles in an ever-changing environment.

“For some of you, this orientation will be a review and for others it will come as new information. Repetition often provides clarity. As many times as I hear information, I can always manage to hear one thing that I missed the first time around.”

The Chairperson noted that there were two goals for the Conference last year, and because they were so successful, the Conference was going to use them again.

She continued by saying, “Goal #1 says that we will understand our purpose and be able to articulate Conference decisions. Our purpose is to come together to take care of the business of Al-Anon. The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against a service breakdown; it makes for unity and enables our fellowship to act as a whole upon important matters. This makes the Conference the principle guarantor of Al-Anon and Alateen’s harmony and survival.

The Chairperson then reviewed the second goal, “The spiritual tone of the World Service Conference will prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members,” before introducing a new goal. Goal #3: “Knowing that our Higher Power is present in the expression of our group conscience, Conference members will presume goodwill.”

The Chairperson continued, “As Delegates, you are a vital link in reporting the work of this Conference to your Assemblies. Your enthusiasm, energy, and ability to articulate Conference decisions will help to create interest in your Areas.

“We want you to be able to have all the information and the tools you need, we want you to be successful. Each of us has a role in that purpose.”

The Chairperson of the Board then asked several members—a Delegate, a member of the Executive Committee, a staff member, and a Trustee—to describe their role at the WSC.

The role of Delegates is to:

- Bring the viewpoint of their Area
- Act as the channel through which information flows back to their Area
- Attend all sessions of the Conference
- Vote their conscience
- Think abundantly when asked to share

The Delegate is a leader.

The role of Executive Committee members is to:

- Oversee the routine operation of the WSO
- Approve the Finance Committee reports
- Review project proposals, approvals, the budget, and the status of the strategic plan
- Oversee the Archives

The Executive Committee safeguards Al-Anon principles.

The role of staff members is to:

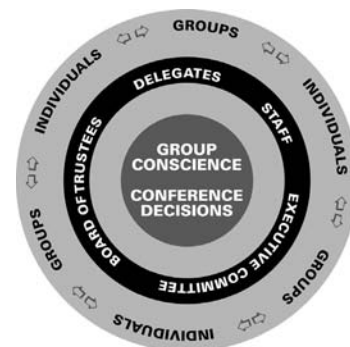
- Report activities to the Conference
- Identify and report trends of the membership
- Support international communities and electronic meetings
- Provide public outreach, support
- Implement motions and ideas taken from the WSC
- Provide the *Conference Summary* as a resource for Delegates to take back to their Areas
- Provide and update literature
- Work with WSO volunteers for planning of the WSC

The staff implements the decisions of the Conference and the Board.

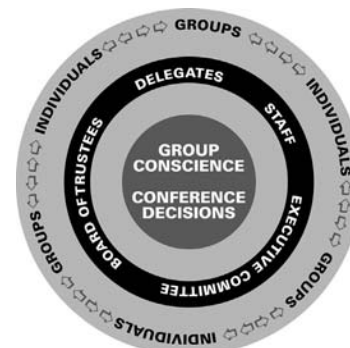
The role of Trustees is to:

- Chair the Conference
- Present financial and policy reports
- Answer questions, serve in support roles, and support Delegates in their leadership roles
- Bring the perspective of the Board to the Conference

In short, Trustees are the chief service arm of the Conference, in accordance with the Charter.



Member to Member
Group to Group



Member to Group
to Trusted Servant



Trusted Servant to
Trusted Servant



Carrying the Message Back

The Chairperson noted that earlier in the morning, Conference members voted to seat other Conference participants who were attending in a different role. These participants have specifically designated voice, but no vote. The Chairperson then asked three of the participants to share what their role is at the Conference.

The Director of Business Services shared that he:

- Provides financial reporting
- Responds to questions regarding financial matters

The Chairperson of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management shared that she:

- Advises the Conference if the Board and the WSO are not in compliance with the spirit and intent of Motion 12 (1994 WSC)

The International Representative from New Zealand shared that he:

- Represents New Zealand and reports back
- Carries the hope, enthusiasm, and support from the Conference back to New Zealand
- Participates in the goodwill of the Conference

Following the review of roles, the Chairperson of the Board reviewed “The Paths to a Group Conscience” graphics. She said, “Working together we form the relationships shown on this chart (Member to Member, Group to Group graphic). Do you remember this from last year? It helped us understand our relationships and how we come to an informed group conscience.

“‘The Paths to a Group Conscience’ also appeared on the back of our 2009 Conference Summary. Perhaps some of you will share ‘The Paths to a Group Conscience’ with your Areas. It shows how we all work together, beginning with the individual member.”

The session continued with the Chairperson giving an overview of the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to reach an informed group conscience—a process that was introduced to the Conference four years ago. She reminded Conference members that not everything will be presented in the KBDM format. She stated that the Conference has to be flexible and use good judgment. She added that if Delegates planned to implement KBDM in their Areas, they will want to be flexible, too.

The Chairperson continued, “Did you notice the title is expanded somewhat? The Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process to reach an informed group conscience (KBDM). In talking to some of our members, it was realized that some thought we were abandoning our idea of group conscience and therefore they had a difficult time accepting a new process. Hopefully this will help clarify this information.”

Her overview of KBDM included four essential elements for the process:

Open Communication between leadership and membership:

“Talk to each other, and reason things out” is a phrase we hear at the closing of every Al-Anon meeting. Wiser words were probably never spoken. Isn’t this what our chart, “The Paths to a Group Conscience,” is all about?

Dialogue before deliberation:

This element is the opposite of *Robert’s Rules of Order*; it allows us to discuss the information, ask questions, and express our concerns before we construct a motion. Often the discussion reveals that we really don’t need a motion; in fact, all we need at times is to have the discussion.

All decision-makers will have common access to full information:

This element is often one of the most confusing. Sometimes all members think they should have access to all information, whether they are part of the decision-making body or not, sometimes you might think everyone needs it, too.

Concept Four tells us, “Participation is the key to harmony.” This Concept does not say everyone is invited to participate. We are invited to participate if it is in our role as part of the decision-making body. In your role as part of this decision-making body, you do need information so that you can be better prepared to be a part of the discussions here. We have worked extra hard to ensure this happens. With that comes trust—trust that this information will be used by you to prepare yourself for dialogue.

Many times you will get information that is marked “For Delegate use only.” There are several reasons for this:

1. We want you to be successful. If you present this material to members not involved in the dialogue, they do not have the same full understanding or the bigger picture of the discussion that

you will be getting at the Conference.

2. Some will choose to challenge you, while others pass the information on with their misinformation added to the message.
3. When you put information out to others before you have the full conversation, you might not yet have the answers to questions they will ask.
4. Information shared is often interpreted by some of our members as an invitation to challenge you and or the Conference decision before it is even made. Some even insist that you vote a certain way on an issue, which is against the spiritual principle of Concept Three. Concept Three gives you the right of decision.

Following the full discussions we have here at Conference and when a decision has been made, it is important that we all recognize and support the group conscience, whatever it is—whether we agree with it or not. The group conscience is the collective voice of at least two-thirds of those present. How we vote as individuals is autonomous and should remain in this room. We all must remember that our Higher Power is here at the Conference and present in all of the final decisions, whether we agree with them or not.

We exist in a culture of trust:

As Al-Anon members, we place a great value on trust. It is a principle that we experience with our first Al-Anon service. We learn to have a firm belief that each of us would never, knowingly, do anything to hurt Al-Anon Family Groups; we begin to rely on others and to be reliable; we learn to be truthful and rely on the truth from each other. It is when we understand how our spiritual principles are applied to the decision-making process that we experience the element of trust in the concept of substantial unanimity or “choosing from the hat.” Many times, we simply need more information to gain the understanding that lets us lighten our load and experience trust.

APPROVALS

2009 Auditor’s Report

Each year, the Director of Business Services explains the purpose of the audit and its details. The financial records of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., are audited by an independent certified public accounting firm. The auditors, after reviewing all the materials provided, found that the financial statements were in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

Prior to the Conference, a copy of the audit, including the opinion letter of the independent auditors, was posted on e-Communities for all Conference members to review (it can be found on the Members’ Web site, www.al-anon.org/members). During the Conference, the Director gave a page-by-page explanation of the audit.

Conference members had the following questions:

In regard to the depreciation of the building over 40 years, does it become zero? If we sell the building, would we pay capital gains tax?

Yes, eventually the cost basis will be zero. However, as a not-for-profit organization, we do not pay capital gains tax.

Regarding investment expenses, do you routinely check whether your investment fees are competitive?

Yes.

How long have we been using this company to do our audits?

Eight years. We changed the reviewing partner after five years with the same company.

Why does the International Convention Income reference only the 2008 Convention revenue and expenses?

Page 3 shows the net figure of revenue from the 2008 International Convention. International Conventions only occur every five years.

A motion to approve the 2009 Audited Financial Report was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #2, page 83.)

Frank R.
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach
Director of Business Services
(non-member)

SCHEDULE 1

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUP HEADQUARTERS, INC.

	2010 Budget	2010 Preliminary Budget	2009 Actual
<u>Operating Expenses</u>			
Salaries	2,428,000	2,428,000	2,442,350
Payroll Taxes	190,000	190,000	178,030
Employee Benefits	<u>605,000</u>	<u>605,000</u>	<u>587,777</u>
Total Labor Costs	3,223,000	3,223,000	3,208,157
Building Occupancy	258,000	258,000	269,175
Packing & Shipping (Net)	40,000	40,000	40,052
Postage	311,000	311,000	252,169
Telephone	48,000	48,000	49,038
Stationery & Office Supplies	93,000	93,000	97,364
Outreach Activities	32,000	32,000	1,642
Office Services & Expenses	133,000	133,000	143,532
Repairs & Maintenance	16,000	16,000	14,553
Travel & Meetings	195,000	220,000	169,545
Direct Conference Costs (Net) Schedule 2	76,000	70,000	71,266
Legal & Audit	40,000	40,000	36,681
Printing	202,000	202,000	136,877
Canadian Office	14,000	14,000	14,117
General Service Meeting	26,000	26,000	
TEAM Event	35,000	35,000	
In-Office Volunteers	4,000	4,000	3,610
PSA Campaign	124,000	124,000	71,019
Miscellaneous	<u>24,000</u>	<u>24,000</u>	<u>22,983</u>
Total Operating Expense	4,894,000	4,913,000	4,601,780
Membership Survey			16,467
Outreach Media (Al-Anon & Alateen)			56,799
Depreciation & Amortization (Exc. Bldg.)	<u>110,000</u>	<u>110,000</u>	<u>106,781</u>
Total Expense	\$5,004,000	\$5,023,000	\$4,781,827
<u>Estimated Revenue</u>			
Literature Sales less cost of printing	2,976,000	2,976,000	3,007,728
Contributions	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,248,194
Forum Subscriptions	300,000	300,000	275,568
Investment Income/Transfer from Reserve Fund	<u>220,000</u>	<u>220,000</u>	<u>228,782</u>
Total Estimated Revenue	4,996,000	4,996,000	\$4,760,272

2010 Budget

The 2010 Budget was presented to Conference members by the Treasurer of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The 2010 Budget shows that we expect expenses to be \$8,000 more than revenue for the year. We are estimating expenses to be \$5,004,000 and revenues to be \$4,996,000. This year we adjusted the preliminary Schedule 2 for those Conference costs that have been recorded. We also removed one of the planned trips from Travel and Meetings.

Frank R.
Treasurer, Trustee

David Zach
Director of Business Services
(non-member)

PROJECTED EXPENSES

Overall expense is budgeted to increase by \$222,000 from last year's actual expenses. Labor costs are expected to increase \$15,000 due to more staff becoming eligible for the retirement plan and an increase in state unemployment taxes. We expect salaries to be \$14,000 less since we did not budget any salary increases for 2010, and we do not plan to fill the vacancies created when two staff members resigned last year. On the Outreach Activities line, we have included funds to be available for projects that may be proposed during the year.

ESTIMATED INCOME

We are estimating income from literature sales to be about the same as last year and *Forum* subscription income to be more. We are budgeting contributions to be \$1.5 million, which is about \$250,000 more than last year's actual contributions. Beginning in 2008, we agreed to transfer up to 4% of the fair value of the Reserve Fund to the General Fund. Since the average value dropped for the 36 months ending December 31, 2009, we are budgeting investment income about \$8,000 less than last year.

Conference members had the following questions:

Regarding upgraded hardware, are the computers purchased or leased?

Purchased.

Has the WSO considered leasing computers for a cost advantage?

Yes, there is no advantage.

Is the WSO self-insured? Does the WSO have general liability?

The WSO is self-insured for some hospitalization and dental costs. General liability insurance is included under Office Services. The WSO also has auto insurance.

There are no salary increases in the budget. Is there a cost of living increase?

At this time, there will be no increases, including cost of living. This will be looked at in July, and if a change is made, it could go into effect this year.

Do we know the value of the volunteer hours? Is there a record?

No.

Could we get rid of the Equalized Expense and charge Areas the actual cost to attend Conference?

Areas can choose to pay the actual cost vs. the Equalized Expense.

What is the difference between the actual cost and the Equalized Expense of sending a Delegate to the Conference?

The actual cost is what it actually costs for a Delegate to attend Conference. Because costs of travel to the WSC are different for each Delegate, a formula was developed to provide fair equalization of expenses. The Equalized Expense amount is a portion of the actual cost—historically around two-thirds of the actual cost split equally between all 67 Areas.

Where is the post retirement fund?

This is part of the Reserve Fund.

When I call the Canadian office in Ottawa, Ontario, I just get voice mail. Is the office manned?

Not at this time. We maintain an office in Canada for Canadian outreach activities.

Regarding the cost of TEAM events and the way the RSSs were budgeted in the past, how did the WSO come up with the TEAM event budget?

We previously budgeted \$25,000 for the three RSSs. We have six TEAM events coming up this year, so we budgeted \$35,000, approximately \$5,000 per TEAM event.

Have we paid off the WSO mortgage?

Yes.

Is it reflected in Schedule 1, 2, or 3?

No, the mortgage was shown in the Audit on page 2, the Statement of Financial Position.

In comparing the 2009 Budget to actual, why is the actual salary line so much higher than what was budgeted in 2009?

When we look at the budget, we have to look at the vacation/sick pay that has not been used. In 2009, staff began accruing vacation time throughout the year vs. receiving all of their vacation days at the beginning of the year. We also increased the amount of vacation time staff could carry over. The increase in the carryover was the reason for the increase in the payroll expense.

Previously, we had a pie chart showing the distribution of contributions. Will the pie chart be updated and made available?

Yes, the pie charts will be available at TEAM events and will be posted on the Members' Web site.

When will the 2010 Budget be available on the Members' Web site?

Shortly after it has been approved at the WSC and translated. The Budget doesn't become official until the Annual Board Meeting immediately following Conference.

Is there a cap on the number of vacation hours that can be banked?

Staff can carry over up to their total annual vacation accrual, e.g., when employees are entitled to two weeks of vacation annually, they can carry over up to two weeks. If there is a special circumstance, staff can seek approval to carry over more time.

A motion to approve the 2010 Finance Committee Report was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #4, page 83.)

Ric B.
Executive Director

2009 Annual Report

In the previous two years, the Annual Report was written in two portions: the Annual Operational Report and the Strategic Plan Update. The Annual Operational Report highlighted the day-to-day activities of the WSO staff and volunteers, while the Strategic Plan Update reported on the progress of the Board's goals and objectives.

This year, as the Strategic Plan continues to be refined, the Board decided that the strategic activities of the Board are an integral part of the WSO's activities and belong under the Board's portion of the Annual Report.

The 2009 Annual Report was sent to the Delegates prior to the Conference. The report included updates from Committees, as well as WSO departments. In addition, Conference members were asked to submit questions in advance of the Conference, which were answered and distributed at the Conference.

Since the report was provided in advance, the Executive Director made only brief opening remarks before opening the floor for questions and comments.

A Conference member asked for more clarity about the "Whistle-blower policy."

This policy is a protective statement which guarantees that if someone suspects wrongdoing within the organization, that person can contact the authorities about the wrongdoing, and be protected from retaliation.

What is the difference between the Equalized Expense and the full equalized cost of sending a Delegate to Conference?

The Board of Trustees sets the percentage Areas pay (runs about 66-67% of the full equalized cost) and the WSO pays the remainder of the costs. This idea goes back to the very first Conference. Each Area pays the same amount no matter the size or distance from the Conference site (for further information, see "Delegates' Equalized Expenses" under "How the Conference Is Financed" in the *World Service Handbook*).

A comment was made regarding a member's difficulty accessing e-Communities.

Conference members who don't have the access or ability to use a computer can utilize an e-Buddy, a service role within your Area to be a communication link with WSO. The member in this position agrees to receive information and relay it to the Conference member.

The Executive Director noted that in April, an American television network would broadcast a docudrama based on the life of Al-Anon cofounder Lois W. The made-for-television movie will give broad visibility to issues of living with an active alcoholic, the benefits of family recovery, and the “Al-Anon Family Group” name. It offers an opportunity for members to encourage television stations in their local Areas to broadcast Al-Anon’s Public Service Announcements (PSAs).

The movie, however, is not CAL and should not be the topic of discussion at Al-Anon meetings. Although the movie is a dramatization rather than a documentary, the WSO cooperated with the producers to ensure the accuracy of information about the Al-Anon program, he said.

The Executive Director announced that beginning in the late spring/early summer all current Conference members will be able to participate in a bulletin board on e-Communities. The bulletin board will offer users the capability to post topic requests and comments.

In addition, in the fall, the WSO will open a new e-Community for all present and past Conference members. The quarterly Chairperson of the Board letter will be posted, as well as other communication. This will be a business site—not a social-networking site. It will have thread capabilities. This new tool will allow for more of a sense of openness and collaboration with present and past WSC members, and is part of the Board’s plan of unlimited abundance resources.

The Executive Director also announced that the WSO will begin mailing the groups’ copy of *The Forum* in a new envelope that states that the copy is the group’s copy. About four years ago, the Board of Trustees agreed to send *The Forum* to all registered English-speaking groups in the WSC structure. After the trial, it was approved. There is a concern that this is a message to the fellowship that individuals don’t have to subscribe. Staff suggested that the group copy envelope be marked so groups know this is a group copy, not a copy for the member who serves as the Current Mailing Address for the group. Conference members were asked to vote for the small, medium, or large font design for use on the envelope. By a show of hands, the Conference chose the medium font. [Note: Spanish- and French-speaking groups already receive a free copy of *en Acción* or *Le lien*. These newsletters contain translated articles from *The Forum*.]

The Director of Communication Services reported that at the 2009 WSC, he had asked if *The Forum* had a future. He noted that since then, personal subscriptions have increased dramatically (up 26%) and he asked the Delegates to continue to encourage members in their Areas to make *The Forum* a part of the group meeting (program) and a part of every member’s personal recovery.

The Associate Director of Communications—Media said the U.S. television network executives he met with in New York were visibly moved by Al-Anon’s Public Service Announcements (PSA), which he previewed for them. He said they told him they believed we have an important message that is relevant to their viewing audience. The executives said they would support the broadcast of our PSAs on their networks.

The Associate Director of Communications—Professionals stated that the membership has distributed over one million copies of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* since its inception in 2005. Sales for 2010 are tracking at an annual growth rate of 12%.

Regarding the history book (2008 WSC Motion #5), the Associate Director of Communications—Literature stated that in January, a writer was hired to edit the book. The WSO plans to have the book ready next year for Al-Anon’s 60th birthday.

The Director of Member Services reported that one of the benefits of the database conversion two years ago was easier access to information in the new database. She stated that the WSO Web Architect is developing a new, user-friendly on-line Group Records registration/change form that will eventually allow Group Records Coordinators to input their Areas’ Al-Anon group information directly into the database. The Coordinators will also be able to customize and run their own reports at any time in addition to receiving their biannual reports from the WSO.

The initial use of the new form will limit Coordinator’s database access to read only; they will be able to read their Area’s group information and run reports. This stage will begin in mid-June. The final stage of Coordinator input into the database will take place later in the fall after Coordinators have had the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new form and run reports.

The Associate Director of Group Services—Alateen and Special Needs stated that three Areas have responded to the request to host an Alateen chat meeting. The difficult task seems to be getting the Alateens to try out the chat meeting; however, she noted that it will take time to generate interest. Areas that have agreed to host an Alateen chat meeting will be set up by June.

The Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International reported that the new printing of the *Service Manual* will include design updates. She asked Conference members how many “books” there are in the *Service Manual* (four), and then stated that the 2009-2012 edition will have tabs separating the books. Each book will have its own index.

Regarding the *2010 Conference Summary*, the Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference reported that plans for mailing the *Summary* began back in September 2009 in order to schedule for a mailing date to the Delegates of August 1, 2010.

A motion to approve the 2009 Annual Report was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #3, page 83. The complete report can be found on pages 93-109.)

VISIT TO THE WORLD SERVICE OFFICE

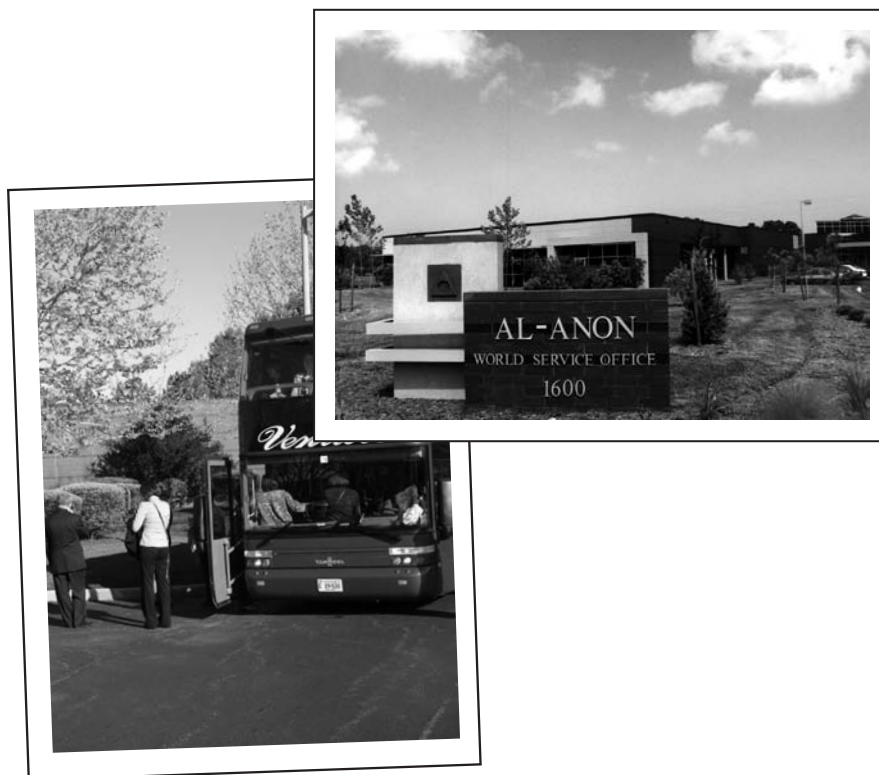
Conference members arrived on a double-decker motor coach at the World Service Office (WSO). They were warmly greeted with applause by WSO Trustees and Executive Committee members.

The Delegates entered the lobby of the WSO, where the Executive Director noted the building’s unique architecture and pointed out the architect’s intent to incorporate the idea of the Al-Anon logo in the architecture. The Executive Director pointed out the portraits of Al-Anon’s cofounders, Lois and Anne; he also showed them Lois’s typewriter, which was used to write to the first 87 groups.

Delegates who had previously toured the WSO were given the option of going on a tour, previewing the new design for the Public Outreach Web site, learning more about e-Communities, or meeting with a specific staff or volunteer.

The remaining Delegates then assembled into tour groups where they were briefed on current programs and activities in the office, had an opportunity to view a poster presentation of the 2009 Membership Survey, and explored the WSO Archives.

During the tour, Delegates enjoyed a light snack hosted by WSO staff and Trustees. They also had time to walk around the grounds, talk with staff and volunteers, and take photographs to share with their Areas.



EUROPEAN TRIP

In August 2009, the Trustee and a staff member went to Istanbul, Turkey; Essen, Germany; and Kecskemet, Hungary. The trip demonstrated how Al-Anon's message of hope transcends other languages and cultures for people who are looking for some resolution to their pain. It further illustrated how face-to-face conversations can often bring clarity and insight to difficult topics that words on a page don't always offer.

Judy A.
Trustee

Marsha W.
Associate Director of Membership
Outreach—International

Istanbul, Turkey

There are 26 meetings in Turkey, and although Al-Anon groups have existed in the country since 1995, a service structure has not formally developed. Upon arrival in Istanbul, they were met by a translator who took them in a taxi down a narrow lane to the meeting place. The building was only 25 feet wide and they went up three flights of spiral, marble stairs. Anyone who wanted to attend a meeting in Istanbul had to do this!

While the translator spoke English, none of the other members did. This is often a barrier when trying to maintain ties with evolving structures.

During their visit, the Trustee and staff member spoke about the Alateen safety requirements, explained the basics about a service structure, and emphasized the benefits of an Al-Anon Information Service as a possible first step. The questions the members asked in Turkey are similar questions people in the U.S. and Canada ask when they are trying to understand the correct way to do something. "How do we get service people?" "How do you sponsor someone?" "Why are you traveling together, do you work together?" The fact that staff and volunteers coordinate jobs was a surprise to them. Their perception was that staff would try to control things and would not be willing to share responsibility with volunteers.



Essen, Germany—Third Trial European Zonal Meeting

The idea of a Zonal meeting came from a trip to French-speaking Africa where a staff member and a Trustee had the opportunity to view the start of an A.A. Zonal meeting for those evolving structures. Zonal meetings are an opportunity for groups within countries that are evolving service structures to meet with countries that already have one in place. In this way information can be shared with several countries at the same time.

This European zonal meeting, with 17 countries participating including the World Service Conference structure, was actually the second formal meeting of that zone.

The Trustee was invited to participate in a break-out session to come up with a structure for the zonal meeting. The members within the break-out group were uncomfortable with the word "structure," so "framework" was chosen. It was decided a Zonal meeting would be held every second year, when there was not an International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM). The Zonal meeting would include all countries within the European Union whether they qualify to attend the IAGSM or not. Only structures with a General Service structure can attend the IAGSM.

The staff member facilitated a literature workshop which included discussions on translation, reprint criteria, copyright, and selling Conference Approved Literature within their countries. Further clarification was provided regarding the ability of structures outside the World Service Conference structure to create public information materials including posters to meet the needs of their populations. An idea of a common graphic for use throughout Europe was discussed but no final decision was reached.



Kecskemet, Hungary (visiting groups from Kecskemet and Serbia)

There are currently 26 Al-Anon meetings in Hungary. Members from four cities came to discuss questions that had been sent to the World Service Office in advance, including questions about translation and criteria to reprint literature.



Al-Anon members shared, during one of the two service meetings, they were not accustomed to lingering after or talking with each other between meetings. After further questions and discussions with WSO, one member courageously shared how alone and isolated she had always felt after attending a meeting; members expressed they realized they had no clear understanding about the principle of anonymity or sponsorship.

In addition to attending an Al-Anon meeting, the volunteer and staff attended an open A.A. meeting in Hungarian that was held for their benefit. While they couldn't understand the language, the feelings of the members came through clearly.

Two members from Serbia made prior arrangements to meet with WSO in Kecskemet. Their main reason for coming was to ask about the possibility of translating and formally printing an Al-Anon book in the Serbian language. After a lengthy discussion, the representatives realized translating a book would be premature as there is only one Al-Anon group in Serbia. After the discussion the representatives agreed they would take back to the group suggestions they received from WSO of other options that would not require permission such as translating the guidelines and/or doing informal translations of pamphlets for use in the group only.

This presentation closed with an illustration of silhouettes of people holding hands around an image of the earth with the caption, "When we reach out to the whole world and embrace our Legacies, we expand our circle of hope."

IBERO-AMERICAN TRIP

Penny R.
Trustee

Ric B.
Executive Director



In October 2009, the Trustee and the Executive Director traveled to Argentina with the WSO Spanish Translator as their interpreter. The primary purpose of the trip was to share service experience at the RIASA, the Ibero-American zonal meeting. In addition to the zonal meeting, the WSO members met with the Board of Trustees for Argentina, a separate meeting for General Secretaries of four of the structures who were attending the Zonal meeting, and finally the Regional Service Seminar for the Southern Region of Argentina.

The meeting with the Trustees gave the WSO members the opportunity to visit the office which Argentina had purchased using the guide of the 1994 WSC Motion 12. We also had the opportunity to meet with the other staff and volunteers who handle their Twelfth-Step calls on their toll free line. All events involved wonderful food much of which was handmade by some of the members. During the Trustee meeting, issues regarding the pros and cons of strengthen the groups that we have versus reaching out to newcomers were discussed. The WSO response was that it may be possible to do both if a plan with objectives is in place. We also discussed not trying to do it all in a short period of time and then moving to something else. There was a lack of clarity between a group inventory and a group conscience. We also discussed the roles of Trustees as well as how to attract members to be willing to serve on the Board. Their current structure limited the responsibilities of Chairperson of the Board and Treasurer to Trustees at Large. The Trustee shared that in the WSC structure, any Trustee could hold any position on the Board. As a Regional Trustee, she shared that after she was elected using the Regional Trustee process, she was the same as all other Trustees. She shared that she had only limited responsibilities to her Region and that her responsibilities were to serve Al-Anon, the fellowship, as a whole.

At the meeting with the General Secretaries, it was shared as to the expectations of members regarding the position even though one of them was a volunteer and two others only worked part-time. Regardless of the compensation, the General Secretaries and the Executive Director discussed the need for balance in the roles and expectations. The Executive Director encouraged them to set reasonable boundaries in collaboration with the Board. Several questions regarding reprinting and sale of literature were discussed as well as an update of new pieces that would soon be available in Spanish. At the close of the meeting, each person said that the opportunity to share with peers was extremely helpful. All expressed a lightness and a reaffirmation of their commitment to do the job well.

At the Ibero-American meeting, nine countries including the World Service Conference Structure participated with Argentina as the host country. During the two day meeting, structures shared their

service successes and challenges as well as encouraging the newer structures in their efforts to build a service structure.

All Regions in Argentina reported a decrease in groups and other countries expressed similar concerns. Concerns about competition with other Twelve Step organizations as well as attempts at dilution within the Al-Anon program were shared and people shared solutions to facing these concerns.

The Executive Director shared about the history of the World Service Office structure including the new types of committee structures—Task Forces, Thought Forces, and Work Groups. During this discussion, a problem with the Spanish translation of these ideas was identified and the Executive Director pledged to work with the WSO translators to bring about broader understanding of the actual phrases and the responsibilities of each new term. Finding members with service experience and a willingness to serve at the Board level is a challenge shared by many structures.

The next RIASA will be hosted in Peru in 2011.

The final meeting was held in Mar del Plata, a resort town five hours southeast of Buenos Aires. The WSO staff and Trustee along with many of the Ibero-American Delegates traveled by sleeper bus the seven hour journey.

During the Regional Service Seminar, workshops on finance, public outreach, literature, and service opportunities were held. The 2007 WSC skit about the General, Reserve, and Building Funds was adapted with an Argentine flair including music and appropriate costumes. The Executive Director spoke again about the structure of the World Service Office and answered questions from the floor with assistance of the Office Translator. Later he made a brief presentation using notes from the Conflict Resolution presentation that he has used at the WSC.

The Trustee spoke about the Board's Strategic Plan and her role as a Regional Trustee. This talk created a request by the Regional Trustees of Argentina to meet privately with her to obtain further clarity of their roles. Using the Argentina *Service Manual*, much of which is adapted from the WSO *Service Manual*, she discussed the various concerns and showed them in their own *Manual* how these issues were to be handled. The General Secretary of Argentina assisted in the translation of that meeting.

The Executive Director noted that the more he travels, the more he realizes how much Al-Anon is the same around the world. He reminds the leaders in each structure that they are the pioneers for their country and that the Higher Power gives us the strength to use the skills we have to serve the Al-Anon fellowship.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS UPDATE

2010 Alcoholics Anonymous International Convention

Fifty thousand A.A., Al-Anon, and Alateen members and guests are expected to gather July 1-4, 2010, at A.A.'s International Convention in San Antonio, Texas.

In addition to joining A.A. members Thursday evening for the Party in the Park and the Big Meetings taking place at the Alamodome, Al-Anon members will have Al-Anon meetings at the San Antonio Marriott Rivercenter Hotel during the day on Friday and Saturday.

Conference members were invited to attend the International Convention in Texas as A.A. celebrates its 75th Anniversary.



Ric B.
2010 Chairperson

Suzanne M.
2010 Coordinator

Barbara O.
2010 Co-Coordinator

Ric B.
2013 Chairperson

Suzanne M.
2013 Coordinator

Barbara O.
2013 Co-Coordinator

2013 Al-Anon International Convention

The Coordinator asked the members, “Have you ever been to an Al-Anon International Convention?” She continued, “It’s a great way to celebrate recovery, meet old friends, and make new ones. An International Convention is where members from Canada, the U.S., and many other countries gather together to speak the same language—the language of the heart.

“Can you imagine what it sounds like to hear 5,000 attendees—Al-Anon, Alateen, A.A., and guests—say the Serenity Prayer? Have you ever seen the parade of countries that have Al-Anon Family Groups? We hope you’ll join us for the next Al-Anon International Convention.

The Coordinator said, “And now, I ask you to picture yourself in Vancouver, British Columbia, in July of 2013.” The Co-Coordinator held up a picture frame with a picture of Vancouver and a cut-out so members could picture themselves in Vancouver. The Coordinator continued, “We hope these photos encourage members to picture themselves at Al-Anon Family Groups’ International Convention, July 2013, in Vancouver!”



POLICY COMMITTEE

Mary G.
Chairperson, Trustee

Karen R.
Co-Chairperson, Trustee

Barbara O.
Secretary,
Director of Member Services

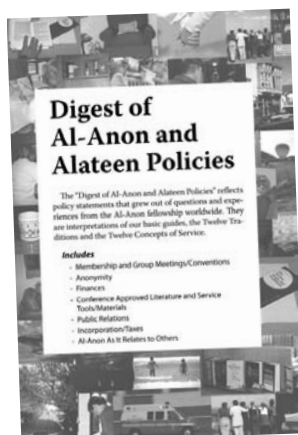
In the past year, the Policy Committee has continued its review of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). Its intent was to ensure that the content of the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” is a clear and concise statement of Al-Anon policy—not historical background, nor WSO process or procedure.

Task Forces were assigned to examine specific issues and pages in the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” and to recommend revisions, when appropriate. As a result of this ongoing process, the Policy Committee brought five motions to the 2010 World Service Conference. These motions proposed adding a new Alateen section, as well as revisions to pages 77-79, 84-89, 92-95, and 100 of the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. The Committee believed that the recommended changes would improve the clarity of specific text. (See WSC Motions #5, #7, #8, and #10 beginning on page 83.)

Alateen Section

A Task Force was charged with designing an entire section of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” that would be called “Alateen.” The charge of the Task Force included reviewing all of the Alateen guidelines, the 2003 Alateen Motion, and the *Service Manual*.

The current policy regarding Alateen (2003 Motion) is not part of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies.” The first paragraph of the new Alateen section, which is a note, summarizes the general ideas of the Board’s Motion without restating the actual language of the Motion. The 2003 Motion will not appear in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” because it is a legal document that can only be changed by the Board of Trustees.



Discussion included the following:***A member asked, “Why aren’t the Alateen Traditions specified in the ‘Note’?”***

The Policy Committee Chairperson stated that the “Note” is not part of the Policy. It is a note written by the Board of Trustees, therefore, only the Board can change the note. The Policy Committee will forward any suggestions to the Board.

Do groups located in one state/province that are a part of another Al-Anon Assembly Area have to register in the geographical location of the group first, and then in the Area?

Occasionally, a town or county geographically located in one state/province is a part of a neighboring state/province’s Al-Anon Assembly Area, by mutual agreement between the two Areas.

Alateen groups register in the Al-Anon Area in which they are assigned by geography or agreement. However, Alateen groups must be in compliance with the state/provincial laws where the meeting is situated, as well as the Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements for the Area in which it is a part whether by geography or agreement.

For certification as Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS), members must first be certified in the Area where they reside, then in the Area where they will serve Alateen.

Does this policy require these drivers to be insured?

This could be an Area requirement.

Regarding requirements and procedures, are they the same thing, or two different things?

Many Areas have combined the two into one document. Requirements are what has to happen, and the procedure is how it is done.

Is the Al-Anon group only responsible when the Alateen Group Sponsor is not around, or always?

The Al-Anon group, as a whole, is responsible for the prudent safety of all its members.

I have a problem with the group being responsible for the safety of its members, Alateen or otherwise. Are we setting ourselves up for liability problems by having this in our “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies”?

The policy is not a legal document as the Alateen Motion was. The “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” is a spiritual document. By stating this, we are actually saying that we do take responsibility.

A member questioned events with Alateen participation.

An Alateen conference is not necessarily a closed event, the event has to have a safety plan in which it is clear who is certified and who is not and that the Alateens are always under the care of the AMIASSs. The host committee needs to work with the Area to make sure the Alateen requirements are upheld. These are Area requirements, not WSO requirements.

Whose job is it to educate the members and implement the policy in our Areas?

It is the Delegate’s role.

A motion to approve the new Alateen Policy section was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #5, page 83.)

Financial Matters Section

Since January 2009, the Policy Committee has been having discussions on the “Finances” section of the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies.” In April 2009, the Policy Committee agreed that major revamping of the “Finances” section was in order. A new Task Force was appointed to suggest a major revision to the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” section now entitled “Finances,” pages 84-88, to include whether the section is mislabeled and offer other suggestions on how the section can best serve groups, districts, and Areas.

Although the Task Force’s main goal was to provide clarity in the text, the original charge was expanded to include the paragraph on page 89 titled “Public Meetings.”

Floor discussion included:***Why did you move the section on earmarking? Do we need that section?***

It was moved to provide clarity and as a way to educate the membership that we do not earmark any type of contribution.

Regarding “Combined Giving Campaigns,” what are “Combined Giving Campaigns”?

Some members make contributions through agencies such as the United Way. The United Way may take a percentage of the donation, which is not Al-Anon’s concern. The WSO must be able to identify that you’re a member in order to accept the contribution. It is helpful when members inform the WSO they are donating, the same as for bequests. This is not a change of policy, it is something we’ve always done. It is included so that members will know this is possible.

In the section, “By Groups and Other Service Entities,” does “without limit” refer to the number of times or the amount of money?

Both. Groups can give as often as they want and as much as they want. The purpose is not to limit the donation as such, but to protect anonymity and keep one from earmarking the donation.

Regarding the section, “Discounts and Services,” if people allow us to use their printer for free, does that mean we may not accept this?

It is okay as long as they allow similar organizations to do so as well. It isn’t required that we pay top dollar for everything. It’s worthwhile to ask whether others give a discount to non-profits. This could include discounts to participate in health fairs or other exhibits.

Regarding “Raffles/Lottery Tickets,” since Bermuda is part of our Area and they have different laws there, how can we reconcile this?

If a function is Area-wide, it must abide by both North Carolina and Bermuda laws.

Members think their Area or group is a non-profit just because AFG, Inc. is.

Not so, many Areas and all groups are not registered as non-profit organizations. As a group is not a legal entity, “Our groups, as such, ought never be organized.” It would never be registered.

A motion to approve the “Finances” section was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #7, page 85.)

Outside Publications Section

A Task Force was assigned to look at the section “Outside Publications,” *Other Literature at Meetings* on page 94 of the *Service Manual* as it relates to the words “brief excerpts”; “personal sharing”; and the use of the word “suggested.” The Task Force’s original charge was to suggest new clarifying language, if needed for this section. During the study, the members of the Task Force also reviewed the sections on “Use of Material,” on page 92, and “Other Publications,” on page 93. The Task Force was granted permission to expand its charge and present a more complete review of all the sections that would help clarify the concern originally brought to the Policy Committee by a Delegate.

The discussion included:

My Area will object to the deletion of “it is suggested,” as we have no rules in Al-Anon.

I would like to address the comment that we have no rules in Al-Anon. What’s the dual member policy? I want the fellowship to move away from the mindset that we only use Al-Anon material at meetings, to include that we only use Al-Anon material at meetings, conventions, and conferences. The real meaning of this section is that we keep Al-Anon in Al-Anon recovery meetings and only use AFG, Inc. produced material.

We are creating an “us” and “them” atmosphere when we are restrictive and attempt to dictate what is being used, or can be used, in our meetings. We are creating disunity when we say what can or cannot be used. We need to be very cautious and consider how newcomers view this in-house fighting, creating a war within our own structure. I think the word “only” should be deleted.

The Conference has affirmed and reaffirmed the importance of using only CAL. The 2006 Membership Survey shows that 98% of groups use CAL.

I love that the word “suggested” is removed. I’m a sick guy and I see it as a loophole and I’ll use it if I can get away with it. Regarding meeting lists, I don’t use a meeting list in a meeting. Regarding the printing of cookbooks for fund-raising—again, I’m not going to use the cookbook to lead a meeting.

This is a statement of values more than a command. It’s not saying we’ll eradicate every tape. We recognize what we are powerless over. *The Forum* is approved for use in meetings, it says so in the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies.”

I supported removing “it is suggested” because as I interpret page 75 in the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies,” it is reflective and not directive. This isn’t a book of rules created by the WSO to harass our members. It is a compilation of the responses to letters from our early group members

and reflects our group conscience of the WSC. This is a reflection of what we believe and of what our pioneers wanted.

We could function without a clearinghouse, but we could not function and continue without CAL.

Dual members bring in the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous and A.A. meeting schedules. Is this ok? I believe it is within group autonomy, again, we need to have the conversation and set the policy before the problem occurs.

What about other countries publishing literature?

Other countries are granted permission by the WSO when certain requirements are met. The WSO is the grantor of this permission and the right.

A motion to approve the sections beginning with “Use of Material” and ending with “The Forum” and the section “Reprint Authorization” was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #8, page 88.)

Registration of Groups/Group Names Section

The World Service Office has developed a procedure that has been in use for a number of years regarding groups that wish to register as Al-Anon or Alateen groups that have selected names that do not seem appropriate for the Al-Anon program. At the October Policy Meeting the Policy Committee expressed a desire that there be language in the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” that would support the staff’s procedure. A Task Force was appointed to clarify the section, “Group Names.”

Conference discussion included:

Some people think their name (that is nickname or humorous-sounding name) does “reflect” Al-Anon principles.

It seems punitive for the WSO to review proposed group names for adherence to principles.

When the group name is questionable, the WSO contacts the group by phone. If the name is still unacceptable, it goes to the Executive Committee to confirm that it is unacceptable. The WSO informs the group that they can register with another name during the review, and once it is resolved, a group name change form can be submitted.

At one point in the discussion, the motion was referred back to the original members of the Task Force for clarification before a motion to approve was presented later in the Conference.

A motion to approve the “Group Names” section was made, seconded, and carried. (See WSC Motion #10, page 90.)

Public Service Announcements (PSAs)

It had come to the attention of staff that Al-Anon members are producing public service announcements to post on “YouTube.” At the October meeting a discussion ensued about whether the production of PSAs should have similar language as is found on page 100 of the *Service Manual* regarding “Public Information Literature.” A Task Force was appointed to study the topic and to suggest possible language for the “Policy Digest.”

Conference members discussed the topic.

I feel “inexpensive” is a word that varies from one person to another; it is a vague term.

I suggest we add “districts” or “other service arms,” so if a group or a district wants to do this, they know it applies to them as well.

Could we add “contact the WSO for information”?

We have to be conscience how Al-Anon is represented on the Internet.

I am speaking to adding districts to the list vs. a general term such as “other service arms.” Does that include conventions? I am fearful that Alateens may throw something on YouTube that would not reflect or conform to our principles.

While the intention is for the local community, things do end up on the worldwide web. I am concerned about putting stuff out there without any brakes.

The proposed motion to amend the text on page 100 of the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” section of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, “Public Service

Announcements” was referred back to the Policy Committee for further examination.

TRIAL REGIONAL TRUSTEE PLAN— END OF THE THREE-YEAR TRIAL

Bev A.
Trustee

Three Regions were formed in 1969 in order to seek broader geographic representation on the Board. In 1977, six Regions were created to widen that representation and perspective. Expansion took place again in 1986, when nine Regions were created, six in the U.S. and three in Canada.

The purpose of expanding the Board was to have Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters Inc. (AFG, Inc) represented by the fellowship's diverse membership. Al-Anon members living in various geographical areas of the U.S. and Canada provide a wide range of thoughts, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, and lifestyles giving the Board the all-embracing diverse input necessary for making competent, inclusive group conscience decisions for AFG, Inc.

This Regional Trustee trial process began at the 2007 Conference.

The previous process of selecting the Regional Trustee (RT) candidates for nomination at a World Service Conference (WSC) actually began in the prior year. Three Regions (in rotation) participated each year.

- A Regional Nominating Committee was formed at the World Service Conference for each Region that would be selecting an RT nominee the following year. The members included:
 - Delegates from each of the Areas within their Region.
 - Three other Delegates and two alternates from outside the (U.S.) Region chosen by lot from among the first- and second-year Delegates. (Canada had one Out-of-Region Delegate and one alternate.)
 - Three Trustees and two alternates from outside the (U.S.) Region, also chosen by lot at the January Board meeting. (Canada had one Trustee and one alternate.)
- Candidates were selected using the Area process and their résumés were forwarded to the World Service Office by the Area Delegates prior to January 1st.
- Once all the résumés were received, they were mailed to Conference members for review prior to the WSC.
- The Chairperson of the Board served as Chairperson of the RT Nominating Committee and conducted the nominating procedure during Conference time, assisted by a member of the Regional Nominating Committee.
- Following roll call for each of the three Regions nominating RTs at the WSC, the nominating process proceeded. The process had those voting gather on the Conference floor in a circle to caucus and discuss the nominees.
- Then one nominee from each Region was selected.
- The name of the nominee from each Region was presented to the full Conference for affirmation.

The current trial process:

- The Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) is formed at the World Service Conference for each Region that would be selecting an RT nominee the following year. The members included:
 - All Delegates from the Areas within the Region.
 - Pre-selected Delegates from outside the Regions (Out-of-Region Delegates are chosen by lot at the previous WSC; three for U.S. Regions, two alternates; one for Canadian Regions and one alternate.)
- The RCT appoints a Chairperson who will be responsible to tally the scores. An Alternate is chosen in the event that the Chairperson is unable to fulfill this responsibility during the year.
- Areas within the Region submit candidate résumés to the WSO by August 15th of the year preceding selection. The Board of Trustees retains the option of submitting an incumbent résumé for scoring if the Area did not submit the incumbent.
- All of the résumés are scored independently by members of the Regional Committee on Trustees (RCT) and the Nominating Committee using tally sheets.
- Voting members of the RCT review and score candidate résumés and submit tally sheets by September 30 to the RCT Chairperson.
- The RCT Chairperson combines the tally sheets and then forwards the combined scores to the

Executive Director prior to the October deadline. The Nominating Committee, with the input from the RCT, will select two candidates from the Region.

- After the October Board meeting, the Nominating Committee Chair forwards the names of the two candidates to the RCT Chairperson. The RCT Chairperson then sends the names of the two candidates to the members of the RCT. Any member of the RCT may file an objection (in writing) by December 15. The Nominating Committee will consider all objections.
- In January, the Board of Trustees, in consideration of the Board's needs, selects one of the two candidates as the Regional Nominee.
- The selected nominee name is presented to the World Service Conference for traditional approval.
- The Regional Trustee nominees are elected at the Annual Board meeting, following the Conference.

The goals of the new RT plan to select nominees are:

1. Restore the original intention of broad geographical representation as the purpose Regional Trustees were added to the Board.
2. Present a fair playing field for all candidates interested in serving on the Board of Trustees by eliminating or reducing the issues of personalities and politicking.
3. Free up valuable time during Conference week for in-depth discussions of forward-thinking, strategic planning, and to do the business of Al-Anon Family Groups to help families and friends of alcoholics.
4. Bring back to the Conference the spirit of democracy as stated in Warranty Five in that all Conference action will be democratic in thought and action.
5. Provide the Board with skilled, competent, dependable, committed, team players, and communicators who can articulate the vision, mission, and goals of the Corporation for the benefit of worldwide Al-Anon

According to the By-laws of the Corporation, the Trustees shall control and manage the affairs of the Corporation and are a self-electing Board and are charged with the duty of setting the highest possible standards for our harmony and functioning. The Charter also states the Board shall reserve the right to decide which of its decisions may require referral to the Conference, since the World Service Conference represents Al-Anon as a whole, input from the Conference is desired before a decision is made.

The following are options on how to proceed:

- End the trial and return to previous process
- End the trial and accept current process
- Continue the trial

Conference members shared their thoughts and experience with the Regional Trustee trial.

Is it true that one cannot turn in résumés for both RT and TAL at same time? Is someone precluded from being considered because of a process?

The current process allows a member to submit a résumé for either Trustee at Large or Regional Trustee, but not both at the same time. This idea is being discussed at the next Board of Trustees meeting.

It is important to be objective and the new process is objective. Last year, the Regional Trustee candidates were interviewed by the Board of Trustees. Is this part of the process?

No, the Board of Trustees did this on a trial basis, but it is not part of the process yet.

Why the difference between the number of Delegates drawn by lot for Canada and U.S.?

You never want the Out-of-Region Delegates to outnumber the In-Region Delegates, and if you had three Delegates in Canada, it would.

In my Area, a Past Delegate came back to the Area traumatized because she had to speak at the Conference about her Region's candidate. She felt she let that person down, because she was not a great public speaker. This new process takes out that personality piece.

If the Board knows what they are looking for, they could tell the Delegates so we know what the Board is looking for. Why have a face-to-face interview? Couldn't this become a bit biased?

I like the trial process; it took out a lot of the personalities. A person's characteristics were passed on instead of the campaigning. Scoring was easy and the directions clear.

Six years ago, I came to the microphone and said some of the members did not have the skill level to fulfill the position. Today, we have a working Board. Today it is balanced in carrying the load. We've told the Delegates what we need. There has been a tremendous change due to the trial.

This new process more closely mirrors the Trustee at Large process. This makes for a more blended Board—RTs and TALs are equal. The Regional Trustee is not owned by the Areas in the Region. I don't think bringing them to dinner is a deficit. This is how the Board recognizes candidates with their own agenda. You see if they can follow directions, articulate the message, and are able to speak in front of people. This was the one thing the Board was missing, and bringing in the RT candidates was so very helpful. We just formed a Task Force through the Nominating Committee to develop a new résumé so the needed characteristics are addressed. This trial process was the beginning; we are still making more steps.

We should encourage 100% participation from the Delegates in the Region because this is your voice. I participated in the process and it was a wonderful process. It was easy to follow.

The scoring is an objective way of looking at the candidate. The high score does not necessarily get selected, as there is more than just scores needed in finding a candidate.

I would have liked to see more writing samples (ability to speak and write with clarity is one of the requirements). Writing test might be given in an interview process. The intent would not be to look for perfection, but to look for communication skills on paper.

Due to the three-year-trial, no Delegate here got to witness what it was like before. It was organized chaos, the least spiritual part of our Conference. There was no guidance on how to score.

I was disappointed in the number of candidates in my Region.

The old process didn't have very many candidates either. Regarding a writing test: there is an additional essay question. Once the nominations come in, there is an additional question sent to each candidate that they are to address and send in, on a limited time basis.

I would like for the interview part to be a permanent part of the process, too. I suggest we continue the trial until we can include the interview in the process. The interview process allows the candidate to see if this is for them or not, too!

The old process had a lot of advocacy. The "interview" is over dinner, more like a one-on-one. The previous process was arduous.

This is a job. A hiring process must be followed, making sure it is a fair process. This process feels very clean. We may not be finished with it, but it is clean. The previous process was messy. I would not consider hiring someone without interviewing them. This all seems like sound business process, and that's what we need for Board seats.

This process puts me at ease; fear is lifted with the trial process.

The WSC has to be prepared for unfulfilled positions when there is not a qualified candidate. Also, just because someone is on the Board one time, it does not mean he or she will automatically be elected for a second term.

Getting people to put their name forward needs more focus. Be watchful of the timeline and have your conversation at the appropriate Area meetings.

A motion to accept the current Trial Regional Trustee Plan was made and carried. (See WSC Motion #6, page 85.)

SELECTION OF TRUSTEES

Karen R.
Trustee

2010 Regional Trustee Nominating Process

The Regional Trustee (RT) Nominating Process is at the end of a three-year trial period. (For details, please refer to the Regional Trustee Plan Revisions discussion on page 27 of the *2006 Conference Summary*.) The Trustee explained that this process began at the 2007 WSC with the three scheduled Regions, along with a previous Region, nominating their Regional Trustees. The decision to try a new process was approved because it was felt that both Delegates and Trustees could have increased input in the selection and that personalities would be removed from the selection process.

The Trustee explained the RT Nomination Process and deadlines using a visual demonstration involving the three Regional Committees on Trustees, the Executive Director, large résumé forms, scoring sheets, and Conference members dressed as letter carriers. Each Regional Committee on Trustees consists of the current Delegates serving the Areas of the Region, as well as Out-of-Region Delegates.

The Out-of-Region Delegates for this year's RCTs were selected:

Region	Voting	Alternate
US Northwest	Leona W., Panel 48, ON(N) Marcy M., Panel 48, IL(S) Christine F., Panel 49, PA	Vicki C., Panel 50, AL
US Southwest	Debbie K., Panel 49, MI Shirley T., Panel 50, BC/Yukon Micheline B., Panel 49, QC(W)	Elaine R., Panel 49, NY(N)
US South Central	Terry F., Panel 49, FL(N) Linda S., Panel 49, FL(S) Melissa F., Panel 48, ME	John P., Panel 50, MA

Following the selection of Out-of-Region Delegates for the RCTs, each RCT caucused to select a Chairperson (from the Region's Delegates) who was willing to serve and perform the duties within the designated time. Also selected was an Alternate Chairperson from the Region's Delegates, who would assume the duties of the RCT Chairperson, if he or she cannot fulfill his or her duties as required. The Chairpersons and Alternate Chairpersons for this year's RCTs are:

Region	Chairperson	Alternate
US Northwest	Berta R., Panel 49, ID	Bette R., Panel 50, OR
US Southwest	Kay R., Panel 49, HI	Teri M., Panel 50, CO
US South Central	Rosie M., Panel 49, TX(E)	Clif B., Panel 48, LA

Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT)

Serving on the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT) was not my first choice. I was disappointed, but I realized my Higher Power had other plans for me. Serving on the Committee for almost three years and being the CCT Chairperson this past year has been a challenging and enlightening experience. What I have come to realize is the complexity of procedures in selecting our Trustees at Large (TAL) and our Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) members. In moving through the procedures, I now understand the importance of the spiritual principles needed to fulfill this enormous responsibility.

The CCT is responsible for reviewing and ranking résumés submitted by candidates interested in the positions of TAL and ECRPM member. The CCT evaluates each candidate's responses to questions. Each member scores and ranks the candidates, adds comments, and then submits the results to the CCT Chairperson. The Chairperson is responsible for summarizing all scores, rankings, and comments before submitting them to the WSO.

The Nominating Committee reviews the summarized information from the CCT, along with its own summarized scores and ranks, at its October meeting. After being notified of the Nominating Committee's proposed candidates, any member of the CCT who does not approve of the selected candidates may file an objection. The Board then selects the final nominees in January. At the World

Marcia B.
Chairperson, Panel 48, New York
South

Service Conference (WSC), the TAL and ECRPM candidates are given traditional approval by the Conference and are then elected at the Annual Board Meeting following the WSC.

CCT members bring their experience, strength, and hope into the review and selection process. They also bring their willingness to pray and be guided by a Higher Power. Principles above personalities, specific skills, and a candidate's ability to appropriately articulate their responses to the questions asked of them are important considerations in ranking candidates. Willingness and availability to serve must also be considered.

As Delegates, we must continue to look for and solicit qualified members to consider becoming candidates for the positions of TAL and ECRPM members in the future. Qualified and skilled members who are willing to do service and meet the needs and requirements of the Board strengthen our circle of hope.

Doris W.
Chairperson, Trustee

Nominating Committee and Trustee Affirmation

Before beginning the affirmation process, the Chairperson spent a few minutes explaining how the Board came into being. (See page 26 of the *2009 Conference Summary* for the history.)

The Nominating Committee Chairperson continued the session by thanking the members of the Conference Committee on Trustees (CCT), the Nominating Committee, and the Regional Committees on Trustees for their hard work over the last year.

"Using the résumés and additional question responses, they worked conscientiously to grade the candidates and return the information to the WSO in time for the October Board meeting. We have fielded another excellent slate of candidates to serve the fellowship as Trustee at Large. The Nominating Committee has also proposed an excellent slate of Board Officers.

"In 2009, the Canada East Region did not submit any candidates for Regional Trustee. The Board voted to leave the position vacant until the next election cycle. A Canada East Regional Committee on Trustees was formed, and a Chair appointed, at the 2009 World Service Conference. This year, a Canada East Regional Trustee nominee will be presented for traditional approval to serve the remaining two years of a three-year term.

"Currently, candidates for Regional Trustee (RT) are selected by their Areas, which then forwards their résumés to the WSO via the Delegate. This year, the US North Central, US Northeast, and US Southeast Regional Committees on Trustees consisted of the Regions' Delegates and three Delegates chosen by lot.

"The Regional Committees on Trustees independently reviewed résumés and an additional written question that has been added as part of the process for a trial period. The comments and feedback from Delegates serving on these Regional Committees were submitted to the Nominating Committee.

"The Nominating Committee, with their own independent review of the résumés and considering the input from the Regional Committees on Trustees, selected up to two nominees per Region for presentation to the Board.

"For a trial period, the Board voted to meet with Regional Trustee candidates over dinner prior to nomination, using a process identical to that used for Trustee at Large candidates. The Board then nominated one candidate per Region. These nominees will be given traditional approval by the Conference as a whole, and are then elected by the Board at its Annual Meeting following the Conference.

"Trustee at Large résumés are solicited from the fellowship after the WSC. Delegates receive a letter from the Executive Director in January and in June. Attached to that letter are a list of openings, deadlines for submission, and copies of all of the résumés including Trustee, Executive Committee for Real Property Management, and Committee résumés.

"Résumés are submitted to the WSO by August 15th of that year. Then they are sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking. The CCT Chair tallies scores and rankings from the CCT and sends a report to the WSO.

"At its October meeting, the Nominating Committee uses the CCT input and its own rankings to select a slate of up to six people to be invited to the January Board dinner for introduction to the Board. Each candidate gives a ten-minute talk about their Al-Anon recovery and service experience, followed by further questions during dinner. Using this information, the Board nominates up to three candidates at its quarterly meeting. Today, Conference members will be asked to give traditional approval to the nominees, and then they will be elected at the Board's Annual Meeting.

The image shows a document titled "Trustee Nomination to the Board of Trustees, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc." It includes a nomination form with fields for Name, Address, City, State, ZIP, Telephone, Email, and a section for "Nomination by" and "Endorsement by". Below the form is a list of questions for candidates, including: "1. List your Al-Anon service experience. Record the group from which you were elected (if any).", "2. Describe your personal and family recovery experience. Include your date of recovery and any other relevant information.", "3. What year did you join the Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.?", "4. Describe how your leadership skills and talents would make you a positive asset on the Board of Trustees.", "5. Choose and state your strong understanding of any one of the Concepts of Service." The document also includes a "TRUSTEE AFFIRMATION" section with a list of questions for candidates to answer.

“The ECRPM was created by Motion 5 of the 1995 WSC in a trial amendment to the By-Laws—Article XII. This Committee, consisting of the Treasurer, the Director of Business Services, and three members who are not Trustees, is designed to keep management of our Headquarters building separate from the spiritual program of Al-Anon. Each elected member serves a three-year term, and the Chairperson is seated at the WSC with voice only. The nominating process is the same as that for Trustee at Large. Résumés are due by August 15th and sent to the CCT and Nominating Committees for review and ranking.

“Today, you are being asked to give traditional approval or affirmation for the nominees for Trustee at Large, Regional Trustee, and the Board’s officers. Each Conference member has the responsibility to ask questions or state any facts relevant to the candidacy of the person under consideration. Affirmation under the Right of Decision requires that each of us take our responsibility seriously. The fact that one is nominated is not the sole reason for affirmation. Likewise, the By-Laws of the Corporation articulate the Right of Decision given to the Board to elect or not elect an affirmed nominee.

The ballots and voting process were explained. Conference members were given an opportunity to discuss all candidates; any nominee present in the room was asked to leave during discussion of his/her candidacy.

The following Trustees and Board Officers were affirmed by the 2010 WSC:

Trustees at Large:

Roger C., 2nd three-year term
 Connie H., 1st three-year term
 J.P. M., 2nd three-year term

Regional Trustees:

Ann C., Canada East, remaining two years of a 1st three-year term
 Carol V., US North Central, 2nd three-year term
 Anne F., US Northeast, 1st three-year term
 Paula B., US Southeast, 1st three-year term

Board Officers:

Mary Ann R., Chairperson
 Carol V., Vice Chairperson
 Bev A., Treasurer

Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM):

Beverly S., three-year term
 Debbie G., remaining two years of a three-year term

The Board announced Executive Committee appointments for 2010-2011:

Judith P., 3rd one-year term, Chairperson
 Liz W.S., 2nd one-year term
 Mary G., 1st one-year term
 Barbara O., WSO staff, 1st year of a two-year term

The Board announced Linda B., Chairperson, ECRPM

SOUTH AFRICA TRIP

Ric B.

Executive Director

The first two times the Executive Director went to South Africa, the WSO paid. Last year, South Africa asked the Board of Trustees to allow the Executive Director to travel throughout South Africa for three weeks. South Africa paid for the entire trip.

The Executive Director spent time in the three major population centers: Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban. The purpose of the trip was to meet the members and share his personal story, attend Area events, and to address the South African Conference.

Two weeks prior to the Executive Director's trip, the National President of the structure emigrated to the U.S. This created anxiety among the leadership, as well as the Delegates. During the visit, the Executive Director shared how they possessed the skills and resources necessary to be successful, even in this time of doubt.

In Johannesburg, he attended an Area Al-Anon birthday celebration, where he shared his story, opened the floor to general questions from the audience, and met with the Regional Trustee and a few members of a group that was upset about the General Service Office having taken a large bequest from a member.

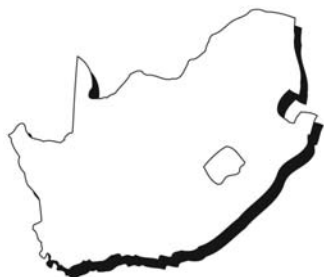
The receipt of the large bequest caused some problems because of the general belief that money is bad and that we should limit the amount of money that we have. The real problem was that South Africa didn't have a plan or any limits in place before they received the money. Even though the Board developed a plan, there was a great deal of mistrust and turmoil. The unhappy members thought that because they had a minority view, the Board should change its mind. The Executive Director explained that the Board had considered the group's views but disagreed with them. He reminded them that Concept Five guarantees the right to be heard not the right to get their way. They had threatened to withhold funds and to withdraw from contact with the Board. The Executive Director pointed out that permanently withholding funds to force a particular view was not consistent with any of our spiritual principles. The Executive Director noted that the Conference dealt with this possibility of a large bequest before it could become a problem, with its new bequest policy and procedure that involved the Conference in the plan.

While in Cape Town, he attended several large speaker meetings where he shared his story and responded to questions from the members. At the end of the week, he left for the General Service Conference held in a neighboring community. During the Conference, he was asked to be the "motivational" speaker as well as to share on the idea of strategic planning with the Conference.

As the motivational speaker, he shared his personal journey in service and related how loss in his own life had allowed him to find new strength and courage. During the Conference presentation of strategic planning, he emphasized the importance of planning citing several paragraphs from Bill's Essay on Leadership, where it is within the descriptive text of Concept Nine. He discussed the process that the Board used to create its first Plan and explained the four main themes of the Plan: Everyone, Everywhere; Universal Understanding of Recovery, Support and Strengthen Our Structure, and finally Unlimited, Abundant Resources. In discussing the idea of abundance, he stressed how different this idea is from the way he lived his life even after his journey in recovery. The Board discussions have led to a fuller understanding of resources, looking for additional people to serve instead of lamenting the lack of people doing the current work. Thinking abundantly frees us from hoarding money and allows money to flow for the purposes for which we need it. It changes our fear that resources will never return to one of realizing that resources appear once we articulate the goal we are seeking to attain. He reemphasized the discussions he had with the unhappy members in Johannesburg and how future planning could bring about both understanding and harmony.

He shared the experience of the WSC structure that when groups, Areas, and districts have large amounts of money, they either hoard it for fear of losing it; someone steals it because it is there; or they fight about how to spend it. Money is not an end; it is a means to accomplish our primary purpose—to reach out to families and friends of alcoholics. He reminded members that his experience has been that members who complain a lot or are aggressive in stating their opinions are often members who need more information. By the end of the Conference and in the week following during his trip to Durban, the Executive Director observed Delegates repeating the thoughts about abundance, to energize their members.

The last week was spent in Durban. During that week, A. A. was holding several large celebrations to commemorate the founding of A. A. The Executive Director was invited to share the history of Lois W. in the founding of our two fellowships. He explained that both Bill and Lois believed that the fellowships should work together to improve the lives of all family members who had been affected by the alcoholic's drinking. He also shared some of the history of Lois' trip to South Africa in the early 80's as Lois related it in *First Steps*. At an Area service meeting, he was asked to share brief thoughts about the benefits Areas receive when they think strategically.



UNITED KINGDOM TRIP

Ric B.

Executive Director

The primary purpose of the trip was to attend the United Kingdom and Eire's General Service Conference and to meet with the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director, whose trip was paid for by the structure, was asked to address the Board regarding strategic planning and the General Service Conference about the idea of unlimited, abundant resources. Both topics were presented at the 2008 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) in Finland.

After the invitation was extended, the General Service Office (GSO), which is currently housed in a property that is being sold, learned that it will be forced to move, even though they were pleased with their current location. The WSO faced in a similar situation in New York City in 1985. As a result, the UK and Eire Board decided to bring a motion to its conference to try to own property on a 15-year trial using the 1994 WSC's Motion 12 as a model. So in preparation for that discussion, the Executive Director packed all of the background paperwork and charts prepared for the WSC Delegates in preparation for the discussion to end the trial here. If members there asked what the WSO's experience had been, he would be prepared.

During his meeting with the Board, he spoke about the ideas contained in Concept Nine regarding vision and the need for a plan. He referenced the idea contained in *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* that without an independent plan of action, we are doomed to go wherever the alcoholic takes us. He also referenced Bill W.'s words explaining that the "One Day at a Time" philosophy was fine for our personal recovery, but that as business leaders we must plan ahead. He paraphrased Bill's words about a Higher Power giving us intellect and intending us to use it. Thus the responsibility as leaders is to create a plan, make estimates, have vision, and even to make mistakes.

The UK and Eire Board, like many of us, had not grown up in an Al-Anon culture of thinking beyond tomorrow. He noted that without a plan, members are forced to continue to react and that there is no way to get to "good orderly direction." The Board was amazed because the idea of planning for a year seemed reasonable, but to think 15 years into the future was a new concept. The Executive Director reminded them of Lois W.'s words that there is no difference between good Al-Anon business practice and good spiritual practice in that there is no spiritual part of the program; it is all spiritual. The Executive Director in closing reaffirmed our common belief that no Al-Anon leader is willing to compromise our spiritual principles to advance any one idea.

The Executive Director addressed the conference about the idea of unlimited, abundant resources. He shared that in Al-Anon, money is an end and not our goal. Money is a tool or a means to accomplish our goal. We don't need to avoid money, or fear it. He paraphrased Lois's writing in Warranty One that we only need to make the case for what we will do with money that is being sought and the groups will give.

The members in the UK and Eire, like many of us, had grown up with the idea of being prudent; that we needed to watch every penny as we did when the alcoholic was drinking. The Executive Director reminded everyone that the wording in Warranty One is to have an ample reserve, not a prudent one. Changing our thinking to a thinking of abundance is challenging. When we continue to affirm an idea of lack, we nurture that negative thinking. And we do it with members in service as well as with money. We complain that we don't have enough people doing the work and forget to honor and celebrate those who are. Abundant thinking allows us to build on what we have and stop giving voice to what we don't.

When it was time to go before the conference to discuss property ownership, the Board was already prepared with the idea that a plan was necessary. Board members knew they needed to be open to hear what the conference had to say in order to affirm each person's opinions.

During the discussion, the Executive Director stressed that when we think poorly of people who have differing opinions, we shut off communication. During the discussion, members there stated many of the issues that were discussed in 1994 when our Conference discussed ownership of property. At the close of the discussion, the decision to try and own property on a 15-year trial was affirmed by substantial unanimity.

Later in the weekend, Delegates asked for words to use to carry their decision back to their members. The Executive Director shared the words of Tradition Six and reminded the members that the General Service Office is not an outside entity, but one that is discussed in Tradition Nine—a service board directly responsible to those it serves. Conference members were also reminded that not



everyone will be willing to hear what the Delegates have to say. It is important to thank them for the opinions and not focus on trying to change them. The discussion ended with the insight from Tradition Two that if God is in the group conscience decisions that we agree with, then He is also in those that we don't agree with, and it is our responsibility to accept those as well.

2011 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE SITE

Suzanne M.

Associate Director of

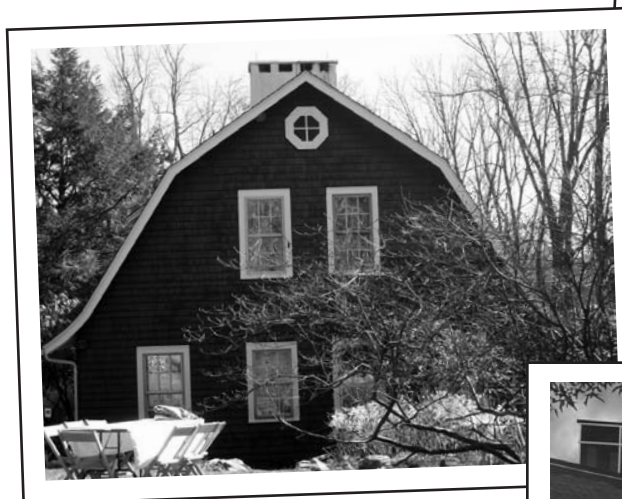
Membership Outreach—Conference

The 2011 World Service Conference will be held in Virginia. Panel 49 will be given an opportunity to visit Stepping Stones before the Conference convenes.

In searching for a site to hold the Conference, the availability of adequate meeting space, hotel room costs, meal costs, and holidays were factors in the selection of the dates and location.

The dates selected for the 2011 World Service Conference are Monday, April 11 through Friday, April 15, 2011. Panel 49 is scheduled to arrive in New York City Saturday, April 9, visit Stepping Stones on Sunday, April 10, and then fly to Norfolk the same day. The Conference will be held at the Wyndham Hotel in Virginia Beach. Conference members will have an opportunity to visit the World Service Office during this annual meeting.

There will be an open house at the WSO the afternoon of Saturday, April 16, and a reception and banquet celebrating Al-Anon's 60th Anniversary that evening.



CELEBRATE! EMBRACE THE GROUP CONSCIENCE TO EXPAND OUR CIRCLE OF HOPE— 50 YEARS OF THE WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE

Mary Ann R.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

The Chairperson of the Board opened the session by asking a Delegate, a Trustee, a member of the Executive Committee, and a staff member to share their thoughts on the following big questions:

What spiritual growth can the fellowship celebrate as a result of 50 years of its informed group conscience, as expressed through the World Service Conference?

How has this expanded our circle of hope?

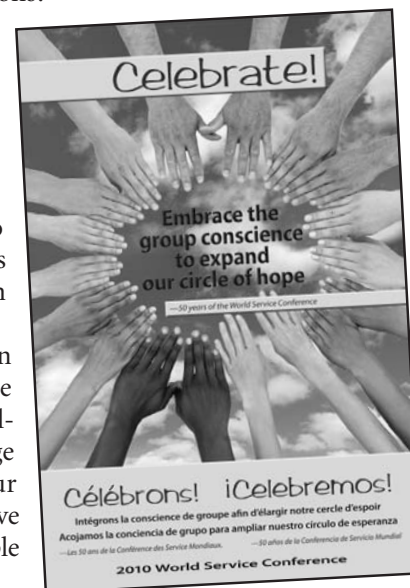
A member of the Executive Committee shared that “Lois W.’s plan for the Conference is working and getting better and better every year. We celebrate that we have a broadened perspective in carrying the message throughout the world. We celebrate that our lives are no longer hopeless, we can change, and we have choices. An embraced group conscience helps us to realize these choices. We become a family, sharing recovery. Let us all remember the unseen member, who is not here yet.”

A Trustee noted, “There were 49 World Service Conferences before I got involved! I came on to a well-polished machine that was running smoothly. Celebrate what the group conscience has done in electing the other members of the Board of Trustees. We were already using Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM), which allows me to participate at my level of knowledge and experience. We can celebrate KBDM, as it brings us back to our roots. We can celebrate our literature! Celebrate what this program does for me. As a member of the Board, my perspective has been expanded. My circle of hope is expanded because this allows me to reach out to people I would not have before, and accept them as they are. I am a better person than I was.”

A Delegate continued by saying, “There is no such thing as maintaining our program, we are either growing or not. In reviewing our history, when I first came in to Al-Anon, there was a lot of talk about the World Service Office moving and buying property. My Area didn’t agree with the decision at the time, but they didn’t want to work against the group conscience. I work to understand and support the decision instead of sabotage it, as I would have before. Every member in Al-Anon, if we avail ourselves to it, has a voice via our Delegate or another link of service. My job as Delegate is to inform the Area of the process and the growth I realized. I am accountable to those I serve. The alcoholic gene will always be in my family and I want to ensure that Al-Anon will be here for future generations. The Conference protects Al-Anon and Alateen against service breakdown.”

A member of the staff then shared, “I came to Al-Anon in August 1988. In October, the meeting announced that some woman had died, and I thought ‘big deal.’ My Sponsor talked about being a part of something bigger than me. I believe tone is important. When I came in, a lot of people talked about being a ‘black belt’ and ‘we have to do this or do that,’ then I remember people focusing on changing the tone, especially since some members came from abusive situations. Tone is something I heard, because I am very sensitive. Today my job takes me to other places where Al-Anon is in its initial stages. They don’t have the things we take for granted, such as literature, guidelines, or a service structure. I remember the importance of tone. I agree with what the Cultural Competency Consultant stated in his presentation when he talked about not going to a different culture and trying to change it, but rather to fit into the culture. This sets the tone. Conference would not exist if members weren’t willing to gather together and use their vacation time to be here. Who would have thought that we would get this experience from having lived with alcoholism in our lives?”

After the four Conference members shared their thoughts, they had a few more comments. The Executive Committee member said that before Al-Anon, she didn’t fit anywhere and she wanted to belong. When she looked in the mirror, she saw her mother looking back. She said how nice it was that Al-Anon works when we cultivate service. The Trustee commented about the worldwide nature of what Al-Anon has to celebrate. Regarding alcoholism rearing its ugly head in future generations, the staff member simply mentions to her relatives that they can go on-line and look up Al-Anon. She said that we can only plant seeds. We never know how they will germinate.



The floor was then opened for discussion:

Our literature is an enormous source of information. There is a huge difference in tone in our different daily readers, which indicate the growth of the fellowship as time has passed. Each new piece of literature demonstrates how much we have grown.

The immensity of our organization impresses me. It is firm, and yet flexible at the same time. I like that diversity and tolerance is not only discussed, but sought. This creates awareness for all of us. In order to grow, we have to feel it.

My mother was one of the first Delegates. She was in on the discussion to have a Conference on a trial basis. How important it is for us to keep growing. I have a granddaughter who is only 16, and she has come to the program.

I am part of a conversation that has been going on for the past 50 years. Knowledge-Based Decision-Making has allowed me to participate fully, as I am able to come prepared and be a participating part of this 50th WSC.

Al-Anon is a program of change and growth. The WSC makes the change and growth possible. The literature and Concepts all happened because of the Conference.

I attended an Assembly 12 years into recovery. When I was the Delegate, I got up, gave my report, and realized this was something I was supposed to be doing.

When we see the pain, we go out and get the help we need. Presume goodwill reminds us that we all are thinking about Al-Anon.

I love the graphic (schematic) of how we reach a group conscience. The circle of hope shows arrows going every which way. I envision it as a sphere, with depth and the arrows moving back and forth. I get the sense of a living, breathing thing.

I am celebrating that we still have an open mind. Bringing in the diversity consultant takes a lot of open-mindedness. We can celebrate that we are trying to reach out to other people who are still suffering. If I want to reach diverse groups of people, I need to step out and go to them—letting it begin with me.

Spanish-speaking members have to really work to get here. It's not easy for any of us, but imagine the language barrier! Let's celebrate ourselves and all those who came before us.

I was really impressed with the diversity presentation because sometimes we just don't think that way. Spiritual growth is in our literature (pages 26 and 27 in our "Handbook"). We are the lucky ones for being here. We have obsessions, just like the alcoholic does.

Through our informed group conscience, we have allowed God to work through us. God is transparent. We are innovative.

I thank the Conference Leadership Team for the vision to have an outside consultant talk about diversity. Also, I am grateful for the survey that asked, "How do we welcome newcomers?"

This is about acceptance of our attributes and our defects. When the Conference found a defect, we worked on it. Our literature offers us so many choices. This reminds me of our Alateens standing in a circle and saying, "I put my hand in yours because I care."

I express my gratitude for those WSC members who hung in there when things were not so pleasant and there were major obstacles and challenges to overcome. It is a much kinder, more loving program.

This WSC follows the principles of Al-Anon with every step. The WSC can be without confrontation.

A Conference member was asked to sum up the session:

- Informed group conscience was sought from the onset by our pioneers.
- Gained spiritual awareness.
- We continue to be a work in progress.
- We are willing to take risks, laying the foundation for changes.
- Stagnation is retrogression (Lois W.).
- A new idea is just the beginning, not the end.
- We can listen with an open mind, trusting that no other member would harm Al-Anon.

CHOSEN AGENDA ITEMS

Prior to this year's World Service Conference (WSC), the Conference Leadership Team invited Conference members to submit Chosen Agenda Item topics for discussion that are general in nature and pertain to Al-Anon worldwide.

Before the Conference, the submitted topics were combined into a single document by a Thought Force of Delegates, and sent back to the members. From this list, each Conference member was asked to select two topics for 60-minute discussions. The two topics receiving the most votes were placed on the agenda. A Delegate was invited to give a brief presentation of each topic, followed by open discussion.

Open Discussions and Presentations

Chosen Agenda Item #1

Topic: How can the members of the World Service Conference develop an effective strategy that would bring Al-Anon Family Groups into the communities and cultures of specific minorities in the U.S. and Canada? If we are effective in reaching minority communities, what actions must we take as a fellowship to ensure that they remain as active members?

Sandra F.
Panel 49, Ohio

Topic: Can we find effective and practical ways to make it easier for non-English-speaking members to participate in Al-Anon service at the Area level and beyond?

The Delegate started her presentation by stating, "There are three questions in this topic.

"The first is: **How can members of the World Service Conference develop an effective strategy that would bring Al-Anon Family groups into the communities and cultures of specific minorities in the U.S. and Canada?**"

She went on to say, "My first thought was, 'Well, we can hire a consultant to develop the strategy and the consultant would tell us what the strategy was. Then we could figure out how to implement the strategy.' To use words I have heard somewhere else, I was looking for an easier, softer way.

"Getting more serious, I began thinking about an answer. However, before I could do any thinking, I needed working definitions to fit my purpose—just to be sure of my thinking. The definitions I found are:

- "Diversity: 'The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique, and recognizing our individual differences. These can be along the dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, social-economic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, or other ideologies.'
- "Strategy: 'A careful plan or method especially for achieving an end.'
- "Al-Anon (from page nine of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon Alateen Service Manual*): 'Al-Anon is a unique fellowship that unites members of different backgrounds, races, and walks of life in an inspiring endeavor: helping themselves and others to lead purposeful, useful lives by overcoming the frustration and helplessness caused by close association with an alcoholic.'

"After finding these definitions, I looked at the *World Service Conference Summary* for the years 2006 to 2009 for background information to see what we already knew. Diversity was talked about each of the years; and in 2009, staff and other Conference members gave a Diversity Presentation. The need for diversity had been identified and discussed, but an implementable strategy was not obvious.

"I reviewed some of the history and gathered definitions. Now, what plan could I develop to inform others affected by someone else's drinking outside my own community about Al-Anon Family Groups and combine it with what I had learned?

"I was stumped. Brainstorming followed, but nothing close to a strategy emerged. I went into my community to ask for help. I spoke to someone familiar with marketing and someone else who had worked with minority populations.

"After speaking with these individuals, I learned, Al-Anon Family Groups needed an aggressive strategic plan that would develop critical key partnerships and alliances with communities that need access to the program.

“The second question is: If we are effective in reaching minority communities, what actions must we take as a fellowship to ensure that they remain as active members?”

“I cannot give a quick answer to this question because I do not know how to ensure that any new member will not only become an active member, but also remain an active member. To me, active membership is a personal choice. As long as the fellowship is meeting my needs, I am an active member.

“When my home group is a safe, accepting, and loving place, I am an active member. Attending a healthy group that uses the principles is another way to aid in my decision to be an active member.

“Doing service work for my home group helps to keep me as an active member of the group. Having a Sponsor and a Service Sponsor keeps me as an active member.”

The Delegate concluded her presentation with a brief sharing regarding the third question, **Can we find effective and practical ways to make it easier for non-English speaking members to participate in Al-Anon service at the Area level and beyond?**

“Maybe it is as simple as finding a member who speaks the other language, as well as English, and asking them to go with the non-English-speaking member, to translate. Let that be the translator’s service position.

“Before I can ever consider talking to members about service work at the Area level and beyond, I start by asking new home group members to come early and help set up or do something for the group at a meeting. As they become ready to do something different or more involved service work, I can make a suggestion about service work beyond the group level.”

The Conference members responded:

- A huge part of this is taking back to our Areas and groups the awareness that there are a substantial number of communities that we have not thought about reaching.
- Have a definite strategy. Due to language, the Spanish-speaking members have been more connected to the Spanish-speaking A.A. members in my Area than to Al-Anon. I started attending Spanish-speaking meetings with one bilingual member and another enthusiastic member. The Spanish-speaking meetings had a business meeting and invited the English-speaking members. We went with the bilingual member again. We planned a speaker meeting, and after months of building relationships and moving through reticence, we planned the event together.
- We can ask Spanish-speaking members how we can help.
- I would love to be able to see more diversity here at this World Service Conference!
- In an effort to increase visibility of Al-Anon, I distributed posters. I will attend the first Spanish Al-Anon convention in my Area, to give my talk with a translator. Our Assembly will have three screens in three languages—English, Spanish, and Polish.
- The Guidelines are posted in English, French, and Spanish on the Members’ Web site.
- Acceptance is part of the strategy. Implement a buddy system where we can get two people to visit meetings together. It takes time to expand our comfort zone. We need to keep speaking the language of love and others will understand.
- I have had an awakening here regarding diversity. We need others to help us feel safe by example, such as gay/lesbian members coming to our meetings to help us grow!
- I’m thinking of our Alateen members as a different culture or community. We can look at ways to use technology to attract younger members.
- Work on our Area Web sites to develop bilingual or trilingual interpretations.
- There are 20 known native languages in Alaska. Are we ready at the WSC to do an across-the-board outreach? For Lois’s birthday, we currently have a “leave the literature behind” campaign. Why not establish an outreach day for diversity?
- We could have an interactive workshop on diversity. We have to identify diverse populations and then make a plan to reach them.
- The Public Outreach Committee has established a Thought Force to find our Spanish-speaking populations and ask them how we can be of service. We could link up Areas so that those who don’t have much experience with this could be assisted by those Areas that have a number of Spanish-speaking meetings.
- Our fellowship responds to what we need. If we ask for it, they will help!
- Our Area developed a Task Force on how to reach remote regions in the Area.

- We have a Spanish Liaison at Assembly and a Spanish Liaison strategy. Fliers for our Area convention are also in Spanish. Translation equipment is on the budget for our Assembly and Convention.
- I would like to see an article in *The Forum* about the Spanish and French equivalent of *The Forum* (*en Acción* and *Le lien*) so that English-speaking groups/members could subscribe to the newsletters to attract diversity.
- We need to reach out to the African-American population.
- A warm welcome is vital to reach diverse populations. They can sense resistance, fear, and discomfort. At open A.A. meetings, I observed that every person who walked through the door was welcomed and greeted. I need to walk up and say hello, especially when the other person doesn't look like me!
- As a man, I feel part of a minority in Al-Anon. Sometimes I just have to be willing and show up.
- We need to be accepting, loving, and compassionate.
- We have a growing Asian population; there's a cultural issue that makes it difficult for Asians to attend groups.

The Chairperson of the Board asked, "What if I wrote a charge and sent it out to all the Areas asking for you to submit your strategies to the WSO for compilation and distribution?" Conference members were in agreement.

A Delegate summarized the session:

- Acceptance and respect attract diverse populations.
- Identify the diverse populations we wish to reach.
- Encourage non-English-speaking members to serve.
- Where are these communities?
- Spanish Al-Anon members tend to hold their meetings in conjunction with Spanish A.A. members, due to language.
- Reach out and make minorities feel welcomed.
- Use translation equipment.
- Area Web sites—incorporate other languages into them.

Chosen Agenda Item #2

Topic: What do we do when members holding service positions are unable to effectively do the tasks of the position, and these skill deficits are negatively impacting the Area and potentially Al-Anon as a whole? How do we balance "being willing to serve" and possessing "necessary skills and talents" to be effective?

Richard B.
Panel 48, Missouri

Topic: How can we get "new people" (defined as current and longtime Al-Anon members, as well as newcomers) interested in service and to become willing to commit to service positions at the group, district, and Area levels?

The Delegate started his presentation by stating, "These topics point to discussions that have been ongoing in the Missouri Area, and perhaps your Area, for several years."

Topics in the write-up are concerned with:

- Members holding service positions for which they do not have the skills needed to be effective in the service position
- Balance of 'willingness to serve' with 'necessary skills and talents to serve'
- Vacancies in unfilled group, district, and Area service positions

There are many reasons some members in service do not fulfill their service duties. Reasons include: lack of time, lack of motivation, lack of skills, lack of confidence, lack of guidelines, lack of knowledge, and lack of desire for responsibility.

Vacancies occur because members

- Lack motivation or confidence
- Do not want to make a commitment

- Feel that they do not have the time
- Do not understand the duties
- Do not want to be in “that bunch”

“The Missouri Area World Service Committee (AWSC) has 50 members. The only AWSC vacancies are eight District Representative service positions. The Missouri Area has about 250 groups with about 27 percent participation at Area Assemblies.

“GRs are key to providing Area information to group members and to showing enthusiasm for service at the group and Area levels.

“New GRs attend an orientation/training session at an Assembly in the first year of each panel.

“The Area newsletter is a service of the Missouri Area to all Missouri Area groups. The newsletter promotes interest in that it informs all Missouri Area groups about Assembly/AWSC, Coordinator, Action Committee, and district service-related news, articles, and reports.

“Active districts and Al-Anon Information Services (AISs) support members and groups by showing members enthusiasm and drawing them into service. Active districts demonstrate service through their newsletters, workshops, pot lucks, and public outreach events. AISs draw members to Intergroup meetings where valuable exchange of information informs members and draws them into service. AISs also have newsletters and ‘group visiting’ committees.

“The Missouri Area procedures state that Area Officers (Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Delegate, and Alternate Delegate) are selected from members who have served as a DR for three years and who are currently active in service.

“Since serving as District Representative is an important criterion for standing and serving as an Officer, the Missouri Area does have a problem in that there are eight out of 26 District Representative positions vacant. There seems to be no correlation between these vacancies and size or number of meetings in a district, nor in financial contributions to WSO.

“For some, distance to Area meetings seems to be a problem. For other districts, there seems to be some animosity toward the Al-Anon structure and toward certain Al-Anon members.”

Officer and Coordinator Prerequisites

“‘The Missouri Area Procedures Digest’ provides a list of duties for each Officer and Coordinator position. Not included are technical skills (e.g., a specific software program and e-mail), equipment (e.g., computer and computer backup), talents (e.g., writing skills), and time resources. To list these as prerequisites may make it nearly impossible to find a willing service-minded person. After all, there are many ways to accomplish certain tasks. Also, time resources are dependent on the person’s work habits, time management skills, and work ethic.

“One example is that of a person who accepted a position that has been traditionally done using two software programs. This person did not have e-mail and had little computer experience. The person was dedicated and did an excellent job without a computer.

Competency of Officers and Coordinators

“The Missouri Area has had Coordinators that at least initially did not have the skills necessary to do the service work. In one case, the Coordinator resigned the position. In another case, the Coordinator struggled with the position and eventually became an effective Coordinator.

“Helpful in the Missouri Area is transitional documentation that is reviewed by the outgoing and incoming Officers and Coordinators. A strong Alternate Coordinator was very helpful in one instance. Encouragement by the Delegate and Area Chair were helpful in several cases. One word of caution is to give Coordinators room to breathe and grow in the position. We have seen many successes in this regard.

“Another idea that is just now being talked about is having technical experts available on a variety of subjects such as spreadsheets, databases, Web site construction, newsletters, graphics, law, advertising, etc. These service-minded people would only be used on an as needed basis.”

The Conference members responded:

- When I first got into “service,” I did it because I was asked. I know there are people in my Area who have abilities, but I don’t know about their abilities. I would like to see a sign-up sheet for members who want to do something so they can let us know what skills they have!
- Offer to help the struggling trusted servant by lovingly giving the person the option of resigning. Many of us hang on to jobs because we don’t know how to give them up. We need to speak up and identify the people we think have the talent to do the job. I couldn’t see it in myself, but someone else could.

- After 30 years of service, last year was the first time I heard, “We want you to succeed.” Members at all service levels should hear that.
- I was told all it took was to be willing. While this is true for some positions, it’s not true for all. The problem could be a lack of commitment, knowledge, or skill sets. Communication is the key to making better choices for all involved. At the end of the conversation we can ask, “Is there anything I can do to help you?”
- The résumé process during our elections really helped. A Trustee attended and gave a presentation on responsibility. We have some longtime members who want a seat at Assembly, but are not willing/able to do the job. The greatest good for the greatest number must be our goal.
- We assign each Officer two districts to phone to make sure they got everything they needed from the AWSC to inform their districts. The incoming Delegate and incoming Area Chairperson select the new Coordinators. The incoming Area Chairperson is historically the immediate Past Delegate.
- We have to put in place a process to remove people from service positions when they are not doing the job. We have to be comfortable with leaving seats unfilled, rather than settling for someone who is not qualified.
- We tried résumés, but due to complaints, we stopped. We avoid asking people to step down because we think everything that is uncomfortable is conflict.
- We elect all of our Coordinators. We have résumés and each candidate reads his/her résumé at the microphone before the election.
- Ask successful Coordinators to share the news with the ones who are not doing their jobs. Send the successes into *Area Highlights* and ask unsuccessful Coordinators to read their *Area Highlights*.
- We can ask people why they aren’t doing the work; there could be extenuating circumstances. We have to remember, “How Important Is It?”
- This is a delicate issue. People are very sensitive about this topic. We used to say, “We don’t need résumés, we need trusted servants.” Diplomacy should be used, keeping principles above personalities. We can try service inventories. Maybe the person would recognize his/her error. We need to be a bit more proactive, assigning a Service Sponsor from the get-go.
- My Sponsor was very involved in service, but then she moved and became a part of a district that has very little service beyond the group. She had to do a lot of attraction by making a point of speaking about service in meetings.
- I am willing to help everyone who wants to do their job, but I am wary about the people who wait for the last moment to get work from another person. I am guilty of helping these people for the benefit of the Assembly. They look good to the Area, but it’s really the work of someone else. These people may get elected to the next position, by virtue of the help from another.
- I would like to have a guideline on how to ask people to resign.
- The Work Group for the Strategic Plan for Unlimited Abundant Resources has a skill survey on-line. The WSO will help you set this up in your Area. Also, Delegates can contact the WSO to get the skill set information for their Area.
- I suggest to people that they watch the various service positions and shadow them to see if it is something they would want to do in the future.
- We need to have a resource pool available. We need to have processes to remove an Area Officer or Coordinator. If Areas do this before the problem, it will keep principles above personalities.
- Even small service jobs are valued. Members who take a service position for ego and status will burn-out and not have fun.
- Every service job is not for everybody, but there is a service job for everyone.

A Delegate summed up the discussion:

- We need to define barriers before we can find a solution
- Lack of commitment, knowledge, or skill are barriers
- Helping too much can be a barrier
- Service inventory is a solution
- “We want you to succeed” is a solution
- A skill survey is a solution
- Start early to prepare for the next rotation
- A transitional documentation is helpful

We want you to succeed.



CULTURAL COMPETENCY PRESENTATION

Mary Ann R.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

John Colon (non-member)

Cultural Competency

Consultant to the 2010 WSC

The World Service Conference Diversity Presentations in recent years grew from an optional Spanish Luncheon and working dinner for Delegates with French-speaking groups in 2005, to a comprehensive presentation that included age, gender, and race, as well as language. In 2007, a Chosen Agenda Item discussion focused on Al-Anon's future, asking the following questions: Where will we be in five years? What changes could Al-Anon make in the way it is structured that might attract younger members who are our future? Are the places we meet attractive to a diverse audience? Also in 2007, a three-part Board of Trustees Big Question presentation explored ways to be more responsive to the diverse needs of members and potential members.

As the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) began planning the 2010 World Service Conference, members of the Team discussed ways to reframe the Diversity presentation. The CLT explored the idea of inviting a guest speaker to speak on the topic of diversity in order to bring a fresh perspective and continue the discussion. It was noted that in the past, Lois, our cofounder, had invited outside speakers to address the Conference, so this was not a new idea. The CLT agreed that the speaker did not necessarily have to represent a particular culture; he or she just needed to be knowledgeable on the topic of diversity. Following the conversation, the Team agreed to ask the Board to invite a diversity specialist.

At its October 2009 meeting, the Board of Trustees discussed the possibility of inviting a diversity specialist. During the discussion, many Board members expressed the opinion that an outside speaker on diversity would effectively "expand our circle of hope." Following the discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to allow a non-Conference member to lead a presentation on the topic of diversity at the 2010 WSC. The decision was unanimous.

In opening the session, the Chairperson of the Board noted that Al-Anon's average membership comprises white women, age 56. The Chairperson then introduced John Colon of the Center for Culturally Competent Education and Training at Stony Brook University, and the Cultural Competency Consultant to the 2010 Conference.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Colon expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome he received from WSC members as an outsider attending the Conference's Opening Dinner and Opening Breakfast. He continued by stating that culture is our learned behavior—it's what we learn very early in life, transmitted to us by our close relatives. He noted that learned behavior includes our rituals, our language, our emotional home language, our customs, and the way we treat our elderly.

Mr. Colon continued that part of diversity is that we weren't all taught the same behavioral patterns by our families or communities. In addition, as we acquire our formal education, we acquire informal education, as well—learning how to relate to others who are different from us (people skills). How do we get along with others who are different?

The host culture carries certain things that individuals adhere to as they move within the host culture. As we acquire our formal education, we acquire informal education, as well, such as learning how to relate to others who are different from us (people skills). Al-Anon has a mission and is open to everyone affected by someone else's drinking—but how does Al-Anon attract diversity?

As individuals, we need to communicate in the host culture language. We may speak in different dialects and with different accents, but we have to communicate within the host culture's common language.

When we approach diverse populations, initially we may encounter resistance and fear. This World Service Conference is a life-changing experience for the members and their families. When dealing with a population that we wish to attract, we can keep in mind that our attitudes can determine our success, fortitude, or failure. No amount of praying will give us a pass to do the wrong thing. We need to practice saying "no" when "yes" would be a "no" in disguise. While not forgetting where we come from, remembering how we got where we are is equally important.

Before concluding his presentation, Mr. Colon pointed out a few examples of differences between cultures.

- Touching of one's hair by another person is often considered offensive to African-Americans, while it is a sign of affection to whites/Latinos.
- Using the expression, "you people," is offensive to African-Americans, while whites/Latinos tolerate the expression.
- Touching/holding hands between males is acceptable to the Asian-Vietnamese culture, while that behavior is suspect to the American culture.
- Slapping another's back is highly offensive to members of the Asian community, while it is a sign of affection to the American culture.
- When speaking to a Latino, he/she may lower his/her eyes. This is a sign of respect, honoring your authority. When speaking to a Latino, it is not acceptable to bring in someone else (family member) for support. There is a translation of male superiority in the Latino culture, even though 60% or more of Latinos who have a higher education are women.

He also identified diverse groups:

- African-Americans
- Women
- Latinos/Hispanics
- Asian-Americans
- Disabled
- Gays/Lesbians
- Native Americans
- Military/Veterans

Editor's note: Throughout the week, Conference members referred to the Cultural Competency presentation during various Conference sessions.

"DEVELOP A CONFLICT RESOLUTION PRESENTATION FOR AREAS" TASK FORCE

Karen R.
Task Force Chairperson

Everyone experiences conflict. It is a fact of life, whether it is conflict in a family, with a friend, a neighbor, a co-worker, or a member of our Al-Anon Family Group.

When we arrive at the door of our first Al-Anon meeting, our lives are full of conflict. Al-Anon gives us the tools to help us deal more effectively with conflict. Our three Legacies—the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts—are the foundation of our wonderful program. The slogans, the Serenity Prayer, the daily spiritual readers, and the many other pieces of Conference Approved Literature provide us with an abundance of resources to cope with any difficulty that comes our way.

Meetings are a special tool to help us resolve conflicts. The sharing of experience, strength, and hope member-to-member is a potent resource in dealing with the daily conflicts in our lives. Sponsorship is a tool too often underutilized in our tool box. Having a personal Sponsor provides not only a sounding board for our grievances, but a spiritual guide to remind us of what resources are at our disposal. Not the least of which is "a conscious contact with our Higher Power," the source of all wisdom in our lives.

We've designed a workshop to use one of the Legacies as a guide to conflict resolution. Unity through the Traditions can provide harmony and growth, not only in our Al-Anon groups and the worldwide fellowship as a whole, but also in our personal lives. The Traditions help us relate to each other in the group setting and with other groups. When people come together, often there is a difference of opinion and conflict. The Traditions can be used as tools to guide us to act appropriately in working through conflict. By seeking our Higher Power's guidance, we are often led to solutions that were not even apparent to us.

The Task Force presented a PowerPoint slide show and distributed a sample workshop using Tradition Four, which could be presented as a seated workshop or as a gallery walk—where members walk around and write ideas down on posters.

This presentation is a guide which can be used to encourage a discussion of ways in which we can attempt to resolve conflicts which arise in our personal, work or professional, or Al-Anon lives. The presentation tries to highlight how we can use the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Al-Anon and Alateen to guide us as we attempt to work through these conflicts.

Conference members participated in the workshop.

Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

Leader introduction: Freedom with limits is achieved when autonomy and responsibility are balanced. This is very helpful when in the midst of conflict. This Tradition helps me determine what is my business and what is not, within my groups and in my personal life. When I am in someone else's business, conflict is inevitable. Autonomy gives us, and our loved ones, the freedom to make our own mistakes and learn from them.

"When we catch ourselves insisting too loudly or too determinedly for one idea or another, we step back and consider if we are trying to control the group. On the other hand, if we ignore the discomfort we feel when our group seems to wander too far from the Traditions, we can ask ourselves if we are seeking peace at any price as we may have done in our alcoholic homes."

"Tradition Four keeps Al-Anon flexible, yet strong. Learning to act autonomously while keeping an eye out for harmony with others is a vital skill. As we practice using it in our Al-Anon groups, taking it through each level of the fellowship, we discover what a useful principle it is in all areas of our lives. We learn the importance of being our individual selves, but don't need to impose our perceptions on everyone else."

Conference members answered the workshop questions.

How do we ensure harmony in our groups while encouraging divergent points of view?

- The Area Chair would ask for all to have a respectful ear for everyone and presume goodwill.
- By remembering that God is in charge, I am not.
- It's okay if people have something different to say from what I have to say.
- When I think about harmony in my groups, I think about group conscience meetings. Sometimes there are dominant members who raise their voices and repeat themselves until others agree.
- I have the right to state my opinion and be heard, but I don't have the right to be right.
- I try to encourage the quiet person to speak up.
- I grew up in an alcoholic home and learned to not share my opinion. Al-Anon has taught me that Al-Anon is a safe place to voice a different view.

How can we discern when someone is expressing an opinion as opposed to trying to control the outcome?

- I can discern by the tone of voice or body language if control is an issue.
- If I have an opinion, I can state it once, if I repeat it over and over, I am trying to control.
- I can consider what's my business and what's not. There is an element of detachment here.
- Often this is about the way we look at things, and so much does depend on our attitude, as stated in our opening.
- I can choose how I perceive something.

Have I really listened to the other point of view and considered the possibility that it may be as valid as my opinion?

- Have I listened and acknowledged that I heard what they were saying? If we end up arguing with them, we become part of the conflict.
- Sometimes I just need to keep my mouth shut.
- My Sponsor had to help me learn how to be nice.
- Sometimes instead of listening, I'm busy scripting my rebuttal.
- There may be more than one answer.
- Listening is one of the hardest things to do, stemming from a lack of confidence in my own position. I'm afraid if I open myself up to you, you'll change me and I'll lose myself.

- When I'm really in conflict with someone (or don't like someone), I have to look at myself. If I have a problem with *you* or with what you're saying—I have the problem.
- Frequently it's just a mirror of my own behavior that I need to work on.
- Saying "you may be right"—with sincerity—is my goal.
- Listening is such an incredible skill. We're taught to talk and communicate, but not to listen. Listening means deep listening—giving you my full attention.

The Thought Force Chairperson thanked the Conference members for participating in the discussion and encouraged members to use these tools in their Areas.

"HOW TO STRENGTHEN AN AIS" THOUGHT FORCE

Judy A.

Thought Force Chairperson

Members of the Thought Force presented the history of Al-Anon Information Services (AISs), which go back to 1955. At that time the book, *The Al-Anon Family Groups* (B-5), said that when there were enough groups in an Area, it could warrant an Intergroup, which some places called a Central Office or United Council. One purpose of the Intergroup was to plan exchange meetings as a means for the groups to share ideas and keep in touch with each other.

Over the years, there have been discussions regarding geographic boundaries of AISs, the relationship between AISs and the Area World Service Committee, the purposes and functions of AISs, the fact that some AISs were formed before the Area began holding Assemblies; some AISs that were working independently of the Area Assembly structure.

Although the WSO began holding an AIS/LDC workshop in conjunction with one Regional Service Seminar per year in the early 1990s, the same issues that have occurred in the past still occur today.

The "How to Strengthen an AIS" Thought Force was formed at the 2009 World Service Conference and was given the challenge of finding ideas to improve the linkage between the AISs, districts, and Areas.

The Thought Force was charged with:

"Brainstorm ideas to improve the linkage between the AIS, districts, and Areas by developing a series of strategies to improve communication and reduce conflict. A desired outcome would be that each AIS becomes a resource for Twelfth Step work at the local level."

The members of the Thought Force presented the four strategies that they had developed, allowing time for discussion after each strategy.

Strategy One

Hold workshops, fund-raisers, open houses, and social functions that will promote camaraderie between the AIS, districts, and Areas.

What are the pros and cons of this strategy?

- Some members are so new in service, we need to send experienced members to mingle, share, and provide support.
- My Area's AISs are pretty autonomous. I am careful to use the word "we" a lot to encourage unity. TEAM events will encourage such harmony and unity within the Area.
- We have eliminated the communication gap with AISs in my Area.

Strategy Two

Develop presentations for Delegates to take to Areas and districts regarding guidelines, communications, and cooperation through the links of service. Another presentation could be developed for use by Trustees at Assemblies or TEAM events.

What are the pros and cons of this strategy?

- We need more education. We need a TEAM presentation.
- There is a real need to do this. Some levels of service have the same members rotating positions, while they whine and radiate negativity.

- Lots of AISs engage in double-headed management. As a Delegate, I need to reach out and instead of me helping them, say, “Hey, maybe you could help us. Together we could accomplish good things.”
- Communication flows clearly by including AISs in our Area structure.

Strategy Three

AISs cooperate and coordinate with Area and district Internet sites so there is simultaneous communication for news and updates.

What are the pros and cons of this strategy?

- Only one AIS in my Area has a separate Web site and I have a good working relationship with it. I reached out and asked for a contact person.
- There are three AISs in my Area and the relationship between the AIS and the Area is like the elephant in the living room—I don’t really know why, what, or how, and I want to know how to change that.
- AISs tend to be very protective of their turf. For the most part, they are working very well in my Area.
- This strategy is working well in my Area. The Area Web site has Area-wide information, while the AIS Web site just has the local information. Both sites include Area meeting information.
- My Area has been proactive—without knowing it. We started a Thought Force to combine our four Web sites within the Area, so we would only pay one domain fee. We asked an individual from each body to sit on the Thought Force.
- My Area is very proactive, we cooperate and collaborate within the Area. Many districts have their own Web sites, but all are linked. We created a Thought Force for guidelines. We can’t tell districts what they can do, but we can have guidelines if they wish to be linked to the Area.
- The newest AIS Chair has never been to Assembly, but is coming. We do not want to duplicate services. Meeting information was not being kept current, so a link was created between the AIS and the Area.

Strategy Four

Encourage AIS liaisons to attend and participate in Area World Service Committee Meetings.

What are the pros and cons of this strategy?

- We have definitions in our *2006-2009 Service Manual* for Liaison Member on pages 63 and 119. The structure of the Area World Service Committee calls for participation by the AIS. Invite them.
- This is one thing that is working very successfully.
- Our AIS liaison has always attended the AWSC and information flows freely.
- I visited all the districts and did the skit “It’s in the Book.”

In conclusion, the Thought Force recommended the formation of an AIS Task Force.

“INTEGRATING ALATEEN INTO AL-ANON WHERE NO ALATEEN MEETINGS EXIST” THOUGHT FORCE

Mary G.

Thought Force Chairperson

Although our *Service Manual* states that young people are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings, this is not generally understood, accepted, or practiced in the fellowship. There are not always Alateen meetings available to young people. As a result, the Chairperson of the Board created a Thought Force charged with developing practical strategies to deal with the issue of integrating Alateens or prospective Alateen members to Al-Anon where no Alateen meetings exist, keeping in mind that the Alateen Safety Guidelines must be respected, if the teens are separated or placed under one or more adults supervision.

“Anyone who feels his personal life is or has been deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker is eligible for membership in Al-Anon. Alateens are members of the Al-Anon fellowship. Where there is no Alateen meeting available, young people are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings.” *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies,” page 77

Welcoming and encouraging teens and younger members to attend regular Al-Anon meetings has not been successful in many places for a variety of reasons, including: the lack of understanding that Alateen is Al-Anon, perceived difficulties that could arise when young people attend meetings, discomfort on the part of older members, as well as teens, in sharing at meetings, and the practical problems regarding safety and behavior when young people are present in meetings. Certain practical strategies need to be put into place to make this possible and successful, as well as to adhere to our approved Policy.

Members of the Thought Force were charged with developing practical strategies to deal with the issue of integrating Alateens or prospective Alateen members into Al-Anon when no Alateen meetings exist, keeping in mind that the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements must be followed when the teens are separated or placed under the supervision of one or more adults. The age limit of the Alateens was not part of the charge.

The Thought Force presented potential strategies, grouping the strategies according to three major themes: Education and Training, Fellowship Outreach, and Public Outreach.

Education/Training

1. Create a guideline for Al-Anon groups to assist them when a young member comes to participate in an Al-Anon group. Include such guidance in the *Service Manual* in an appropriate place (“Groups at Work,” perhaps). Include PI/Outreach information.
2. A statement should be included in the Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome that states that Alateen is Al-Anon and we welcome younger members to Al-Anon meetings.
3. Educate existing members that teens are members of Al-Anon too. This should be a multi-level program that may include many of the ideas mentioned here.
4. Encourage groups to have one person per meeting designated to be familiar with Alateen and Alateen materials, so that if a young person comes, he or she can more easily be included in the Al-Anon meeting. The person does not need to be a certified Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service, just familiar with Alateen so that a young person could be easily brought into the Al-Anon meeting.
5. Create and deliver training for members in the Areas on what to do when young people attend—how to serve and include them.
6. Create a guideline on meeting the needs of teens so that they are able to participate fully in the Al-Anon fellowship. Include guidance on difficult issues, such as rides, personal sponsorship, and one-on-one calls.
7. Suggest that the WSO develop a training program, as mentioned above, for use at TEAM events.
8. Include articles in *Area Highlights* and other WSO publications written by Delegates and Alateen Coordinators to educate members that Alateen is Al-Anon. There could also be a discussion on the floor of the Conference.

Conference members discussed and commented on the strategies. The Thought Force asked members for comments and feedback after each question.

Are there any strategies you especially like or dislike?

Members expressed aspects of the strategies they liked:

- Including a statement in the opening that Alateen is Al-Anon.
- The idea of the WSO developing a training program for use at TEAM events.
- The creation of a guideline on meeting the needs of teens to participate fully in the Al-Anon fellowship, and include guidance on difficult issues, such as rides, personal sponsorship, and one-on-one calls.

A member disliked only using Alateen literature when a young person shows up—any healthy group should do this routinely.

Are there strengths or weaknesses in any strategy you wish to comment on?

- Refer to them as “young people,” not Alateens—the use of Alateen name must abide by requirements. There is a difference between a teenager and a person working the Alateen program.
- A guideline for when to move them into an Alateen group.

Are there additional strategies we haven’t thought of?

- Include guidelines in the *Service Manual*—some members want to see it in print.
- Emphasize the use of the term “Al-Anon Family Groups.”

Fellowship Outreach

1. Create a guideline on meeting the needs of teens to participate fully in the Al-Anon fellowship. Include guidance on difficult issues such as rides, personal sponsorship, and one-on-one calls. Include this information in the “Groups at Work” section of the *Service Manual*, as appropriate.
2. Have existing Alateen members forge a relationship with Al-Anon meetings/groups (to add a comfort level with members). Create a guideline. Create an informational piece. Create an Alateen outreach project to Al-Anon. This is aimed at encouraging Alateens to become more proactive in helping Al-Anons become comfortable with young people coming to their groups.
3. Invite elected representatives of Alateen who are available to travel to Assemblies to speak and introduce themselves. These representatives could be invited to speak throughout their respective Areas. (There is at least one Area which has such elected Alateens who act as ambassadors for Alateen.) Suggest how to work through Alateen Coordinators to bring these specific members to Assemblies and other Area events.
4. Design a multi-level campaign to “Bring your kid to recovery.”
5. Suggest that at least one member of each Al-Anon group be a certified Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service.
6. Have a conversation about discontinuing the term Alateen. Call all members Al-Anon members.

Conference members discussed the strategies:

Are there any strategies you especially like or dislike?

Members expressed aspects of the strategies they liked:

- Increasing awareness
- The idea that the more we involve Alateens, the better off we will be.

A member dislikes the idea of integrating Alateens into Al-Anon—so many newcomers carry a lot of guilt for their family life. Some members are very emotional and this might be harmful for children to witness.

A member commented that Alateens can emotionally handle a lot more than we think they can; they have witnessed far worse in their homes.

Are there strengths or weaknesses in any strategy you wish to comment on?

- Alateens might resist giving up their name/identity.

Are there additional strategies we haven’t thought of?

- Hold potlucks and ask the Alateens to host the meeting.
- Alateens have their own Assembly in Indiana.

Public Outreach

1. Create an informational piece inviting young members to an Al-Anon meeting. This piece could be taken to a school or other places where young people gather.

Conference members discussed the strategy:

Do you like or dislike this strategy?

- This is a fabulous idea—an informational piece takes the personality out of it for teachers and other professionals who recognize the need for outreach to a teen.

Are there strengths or weaknesses you wish to comment on?

A member commented that an informational piece could help to correct the misinformation that is out there.

Are there additional strategies?

- Remember the piece *Dear Mom and Dad?* It was created to educate the public about Alateen.
- Send text messages to the kids as part of public outreach.
- Reach grandparents!

LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS

Leadership Workshop breakouts were offered on two separate days in one-hour sessions. Conference members selected two of the three sessions according to their interests. A pair—a Delegate and a Trustee—presented each workshop. One additional workshop on framing, was presented to the full Conference.

Embrace the Group Conscience

The leaders introduced ideas about practicing the Traditions and Concepts and having a group inventory as ways to embrace the group conscience. Members in this workshop shared the following:

- Support the group conscience even if we don't agree with the decision.
- When we all share and participate in our decisions, we flourish as a group and it is an example of embracing the group conscience.
- Presume goodwill of all members. We all want the best for Al-Anon.
- We experience the group conscience at every level of Al-Anon: groups, committees, districts, AISs, AWSCs, Assemblies, the Board of Trustees, and the World Service Conference.

Responsibility as a Conference Member to Expand Our Circle of Hope

The leaders introduced the ideas that Delegates are the bridge of understanding linking the groups in an Area in unity with the worldwide fellowship, and that reaching out to members within Al-Anon is essential. Members in this workshop shared the following:

- Report the decisions of the Conference to the Areas and groups.
- Take a broader perspective of worldwide Al-Anon back to the groups in my Area.
- The Delegate serves as a contact for public inquiries.
- Al-Anon is much bigger than my home group, district, and Area.

Diversity—Understanding Ourselves and Others

The leaders in this workshop shared that alcoholism does not discriminate within race, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, gender, nationality, religion, culture, or geography. They suggested that we can gain enrichment, strength, unity, acceptance, and equality by embracing diversity. Members in this workshop shared the following:

- Identify our fears about including those who are different.
- Discuss how our groups' actions can hinder the inclusion of others.
- Explore how we can change without changing the core values of Al-Anon.
- Learn how to establish rapport and by asking questions in order to learn about differences in other cultures without being insensitive.
- Overcome our biases and learned generalizations to attract and embrace diverse populations.

Leadership Workshop—Framing

In this workshop, Conference members used the information that was presented at a previous session on cultural competency as a basis to learn about how framing is an important tool for getting to an informed group conscience.

Conference members were divided into ten groups. Each group was charged with answering one of the five Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) questions regarding the topic, The Role of Cultural Competency in Al-Anon's Circle of Hope.

- 1: What do we know about our members' needs, wants, and preferences regarding cultural competency?
- 2: What do we know about our ability to respond to cultural competency in terms of Al-Anon's vision and resources?
3. What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of the world and our fellowship as they relate to cultural competency?
- 4: How can our discussion of cultural competency be consistent with Al-Anon's spiritual principles?
- 5: What additional information is needed to move the conversation forward about cultural competency in our Areas?

Members were asked to use their notes from Mr. Colon's presentation while answering their question.

Following this exercise, the Delegate continued the presentation by describing how to create an introduction. "As is probably the case with many of you, applying the KBDM process at the Area level has resulted in a number of teachable moments for me. New and challenging conversations at the Area level are always great opportunities to learn about the importance of framing and how it affects the group conscience. At the outset, an obvious question is: 'Should the frame be written before or after we answer the KBDM questions?' For this workshop, we chose to have you answer the questions first, before composing the frame.

"Last year, I was charged with writing a framing for a KBDM discussion at the Fall Assembly. I found it very useful to first meet with the members of the Thought Force to get their perspective before writing a framing. Our topic was 'Should the Area host a TEAM event?'

"As we answered the KBDM questions as a group, I gained a new perspective on the topic. For instance, one of the Thought Force members had attended a number of Regional Service Seminars (RSSs), and I had not attended any. So her perspective, which she shared as we answered the questions together, gave me insight into how to write the background and history section of the framing. My information from last year's Conference, coupled with her RSS experience, helped me write a more informed framing that was relevant to both longtimers and new Group Representatives attending their first Fall Assembly.

"After I wrote the framing, the Thought Force reassembled to review the framing and the answers to the KBDM questions. As a group, we made further changes to the framing and answers. Then we got additional input from the Area World Service Committee. At the Fall Assembly, we presented our final document. It was well-received and the resulting conversation during the Assembly was very dynamic and engaging. I found the dialogue focused and informative, and I believe that a well-developed framing was an important part of bringing clarity to the discussion.

Bev A.

Trustee

Melissa F.

Panel 48 Delegate, Maine

“More recently, my Area began a difficult conversation about how to effectively prepare AWSC members who were taking first-time roles on the committee. This topic was not properly framed before we began. As members shared valuable information, the discussion was clouded by others, myself included, who offered random opinions, generalized statements, and pre-emptive conclusions—all of which lessened the credibility of those who shared and undermined trust in the AWSC meeting.”

The value of framing is that it brings clarity to the discussion, helps move the dialogue into new territory by outlining key facts, helps to keep everyone focused, and puts the discussion into perspective.

When developing a frame, consider using one or more of these tools: *Service Manual*, CAL, *Conference Summary*, WSO Archives, WSO Staff, and anecdotes from members.

Using the notes from the small group sessions, Conference members created the contents of a frame by filling in information regarding background, relevance, context, and conclusion.

Background/History (knowing what happened in the past; how we arrived at the present moment)

- We all prefer to speak in our native language.
- Diversity is not valued in some Areas.
- The fellowship needs diverse groups.
- We need education on cultural competency.
- We need to feel comfortable and safe in meetings.
- The average member is a 56-year-old white woman.
- We assume everyone in our meetings is like we are.
- We may not have always been ready to accept diversity in our meetings.
- Ask others how they felt about the first gay person in the group, etc.
- We need to look at our past efforts and the results (example, the pamphlet for Native Americans).
- The Board has been looking at diversity for a few years.

Relevance (what is the topic about and why are we having this discussion?)

- The average membership is aging. In 20 years, where will we be, and who will replace us?
- Our continued growth will be dependent on our cultural competence.
- We know we have biases.
- There is fear of the unknown.
- There is lack of knowledge.
- We know that people move around more today, there are more mixes of people.
- We don't believe we are attracting new members.
- Our Alateen meetings are not being filled because we aren't reaching out through A.A. and the churches where our groups meet.
- We have created new outreach pamphlets, but apparently the members haven't used them.
- Our groups don't reflect the diversity of our culture at large.
- We have but one purpose, to help families of alcoholics. Tradition Five doesn't say which families of alcoholics.
- Alcoholism reaches across all cultures.
- Are we using the CAL we have available?
- Hope is universal and common to all cultures.
- Illiteracy could be an obstacle in regards to relying solely on pamphlets.

Context (how does the topic fit into current circumstances?)

- We know that there are other cultures out there that we could reach out to by providing literature.
- We need to understand the culture and be more welcoming.
- If we go to other cultures, we need to understand their culture and be more open.
- Identify the cultures in your particular Area and customize your outreach.
- Look at similarities, not differences.
- We need to include culture in strategic planning and vision.
- We need to treat everyone who comes to our meetings with dignity and respect; we need to examine whether we are doing that.
- Apply awareness, acceptance, and action to our thinking.
- Our membership does not reflect the diversity of the current population.

- How is this affecting service? What are we missing out on in terms of talent and skills?
- We have a spiritual purpose, not a political agenda.
- We acknowledge where our normal behavior is a barrier to another culture.
- We want to be inclusive, but we don't know how to be inclusive.
- Understand that minority populations often have a high rate of alcoholism.

Conclusion (provide a final perspective on the topic)

- The history of the fellowship is one of outreach, and we've reached a place where we are failing. We fall short despite our attempts, so we are now seeking ways to take our personal, group, and outreach inventories in order to reach everyone/everywhere.
- We tend to focus on minority cultures, and we need to remember the young people.
- This is Step Twelve in action.
- We can plainly see that we need to continue our education process and reach out to professionals for help, as we did here at this Conference.
- We will receive some resistance from some of our service members.
- Thinking about us vs. them, they are us and we need help.
- Talking about this is a big step in the right direction.
- We have public outreach, which sometimes seems to be geared toward professionals.
- This begins with me—not them.
- We need to affirm with our current membership that there are enough resources to widen the circle so there is a place at the table for everyone.
- We need to reflect on what our own Al-Anon culture is and how it could attract or turn away other cultures.
- Although the challenge is large, we have more talents and tools at our disposal, and we need to use them.
- We need to seek what we have in common.
- Respect the differences and remember equality.

The facilitators thanked Conference members for participating in the workshop and invited the Delegates to use a similar format when framing topics for discussion in their Areas.

PROPERTY OWNERSHIP TASK FORCE

Judy P.
Task Force Chairperson

Before the Conference convened, the Task Force posted a series of questions on chart paper in the Conference Room so that Conference Members could write a comment or a question regarding whether or not the ownership of property: improved or harmed the financial affairs of the fellowship, enhanced or distracted the WSO from serving the fellowship, complied with or opposed the spirit and letter of Motion 12, had a positive or negative impact on the fellowship. The Task Force incorporated the responses into its presentation.

The Chairperson began the session by saying, "As I researched the information about owning property, I found, much to my surprise, that over 30 years ago the Conference was getting reports from the Board of Trustees and the Long Range Study Panel about the idea of owning property, and if and how it might affect the fellowship. Various issues of the *Conference Summary* show that follow-up discussions and annual reports were given at regular intervals, with no decision made on relocation and purchase until 1994.

"As with every group conscience that takes place in the rooms where Al-Anon members gather, our Higher Power was present in that room during that discussion and vote surrounding Motion 12 in 1994. The motion presented to own property on a 15-year trial basis was a well-thought out plan. That 15-year trial began when we moved into our new facility in June of 1996.

"Today, in 2010, it is hard to believe that we are closing in on the end of that 15-year trial period. Some of you remember the New York offices, but many of you have only known the World Service Office located at 1600 Corporate Landing Parkway in Virginia Beach."

The Chairperson continued by stating that all 2008 World Service Conference members were invited to submit questions regarding the ownership of property. Following the Conference, the answers and requested information were posted on the Members' Web site, making it accessible to any Al-Anon member worldwide.

The Chairperson noted that this Conference was continuing the 30-year conversation. The final result of this discussion will be a decision regarding the ownership of property at the 2011 World Service Conference, where the Conference will choose one of the following options:

- End the trial and keep the building
- End the trial and sell the building
- Extend the trial for another period of years

Members of the Task Force held an informal conversation in front of the Conference discussing the Executive Committee for Real Property Management (ECRPM) reports, whether there was a connection between the creation of the Alateen Requirements and the ownership of the property, whether or not the ownership of property complied with or opposed the spirit and letter of Motion 12, and whether there has been any negative impact on the fellowship as a whole.

The triennial ECRPM reports in 2000, 2003, 2006, and 2009 have shown no negative financial effects and no negative effects on the WSO or on our fellowship as a result of the ownership of property. The property maintenance and finances have been kept completely separate from the WSO's activities, so that the fellowship and the WSO can concentrate on the spiritual purpose of our program without issues over the property.

The WSO Archives Coordinator was asked to search the Archives to determine if there was a connection between the creation of the Alateen Requirements and the ownership of property. After many, many searches, he could not find any Board discussions or documentation about a connection related to the ownership of property and the Alateen Requirements.

All of the WSO's activities are solely related to Al-Anon's primary purpose. Motion 12 of the 1994 World Service Conference prohibits AFG, Inc. from owning excess property or from leasing or renting any portion of the building itself.

Part of the confusion comes from the word "nonprofit," which many people interpret to mean that an organization isn't allowed to have any profit without losing its status. The reality is that a not-for-profit organization can have excess income as long as that income is used to fulfill its mission in the future.

Some of those points in Motion 12 of the 1994 World Service Conference were:

- That the Board and Conference desire to always maintain the spirit and intent of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts
- That, if at any time, the ownership of property were to cause problems for the fellowship, the property would be sold regardless of possible monetary loss
- That part of the Executive Committee for Real Property Management's charge was to report to the Conference compliance with the spirit and letter of the resolution, including any negative impact
- That the Conference could have withdrawn permission to own real property after six years
- That should the property be sold for any reason, the resulting funds could only be used to reduce future occupancy costs

Some questions have been asked as to whether or not owning property has had any negative impact on the fellowship as a whole.

We have seen no decrease in contributions. In fact, they have continued to go up. We are now able to focus more on services rather than all the tasks that surround occupancy. Owning this piece of property allows the WSO to focus on maintaining the spiritual connection with the groups it serves.

Many General Service Offices around the world are now following our model and are purchasing property. Most recently, the UK & Eire structure approved a similar trial to own property.

Next year will be an important year in the history of Al-Anon Family Groups. We will be asking the WSC for a decision.

Questions included:

If it's so good for Al-Anon to own property, why hasn't A.A. done this?

The Chairperson stated, "I can't speak for A.A., but Tradition Six is discussed by Bill W. in the A.A. Archives. He discussed the possibility of ownership of property, if a separate committee oversaw the venture."

What is the connection between the Alateen requirements and the ownership of property?

The property was never an issue in the discussion about Alateen. The ownership, including the property, staff, and volunteers, is covered under the WSO's indemnity insurance. We don't have to worry about being sued.

A question arose regarding the decline of contributions and groups or members withholding money.

Contributions have continued to rise over the years. There was a slight drop when the WSO first moved to Virginia Beach, but that may have been because members thought the WSO didn't need money anymore. Lois W. always said, "Tell the members what you need," and we did. The money has appeared. Over the last 10 or 12 years, contributions have been over a million dollars each year, except one year and that was close to one million.

During the tour of the WSO, I remembered an e-mail I had received regarding the "health club" they have at the WSO. On the tour, I saw the fitness room; does it help reduce health insurance?

The fitness room has a positive impact on our health insurance. There are showers on that side of the building because there was a print shop in the building at one time.

The WSO wants to be known as a good employer and we wanted to offer our employees what they might need before/after work or during lunch.

Comments included:

When a contribution is sent in now, it doesn't have to go to rent anymore! The money can go to public outreach, etc.

It makes me feel very humble when I come in every month, open the door, and walk in.

This is a smart financial plan, a wise business strategy.

AFG, Inc., the corporation not the groups, owns the building.

It's a beautiful building. We are an example to the non-profit world regarding how to house an organization in a beautiful, efficient way.

Other international service structures have purchased property.

One year in New York City, the pipes broke and we had a flood. Even though the WSO rented the space and was moving, the WSO still had to pay for the repair.

Regarding Tradition Six, it helps to read the Tradition as it is written. The WSO is not an outside enterprise. "Outside" is the key word! The WSO supports our primary purpose of helping friends and families of alcoholics.

I hear that members are concerned there will be a division in the fellowship, but when I ask them to tell me how, there is no response. I do not like the feeling of living a life of poverty vs. abundance.

It doesn't surprise me that this discussion began while Lois was alive; she had the vision to buy Stepping Stones!

A member responded that she had heard that Lois wanted A.A. and/or Al-Anon to take over Stepping Stones so it would be a place for people to gather. However, that ownership would not fulfill our mission.

There is no resistance in my Area that I know of. Why are we waiting another year to make a motion if we've already paid off the building?

Over the years the dust has settled and there is no longer the fear. No one really wants/needs to talk about it anymore. I work for a non-profit and it is customary for a non-profit to own property.

It is sound and I do endorse it. The expenses for taxes, insurance, and repairs would have escalated the rent. As this building ages, we will manage it and keep up on repairs. Our beauty offers a better presence to the world.

There are a lot of people who were not around in 1994, so we need to gear up to educate and defend our decision and choices. When I think about the meetings that are punitive toward the WSO, I think about the graciousness of the WSO—all groups receive the benefits, whether they donate or not.

My Area had filed a minority appeal regarding the purchase of property. We were concerned that this was diverting us from our primary purpose. There isn't that concern anymore.

The Chairperson of the Board commented, "Regarding the possibility of voting today, this Task Force was given the task to present the information, not to vote today. The Board had a long meeting last weekend and the members were asked how they really felt about this. The Board felt they would like to end the trial and keep the property. In the event that a Conference member made a motion regarding this subject, we would incorporate most of Motion 12 into it, there would be two parts."

I feel very prepared to take back to my Area whether we take a vote today or not. A lot of people are new and they need the information that has been so well provided. The part of Motion 12 about “anytime the ownership of property caused problems for the fellowship, the property would be sold” should be included in the motion to buy and end the trial basis.

The Task Force’s presentation brought me back to the first conversations 30 years ago. I remember when my Service Sponsor was a part of the vote to move. I’m going to ask her to come to the Assembly and help me present this.

At the end of the Property Ownership presentation, a Delegate asked if the Conference was ready to vote to end the 15-year trial for property ownership, which is due for a motion at the 2011 WSC. The Conference Chairperson asked for consensus by a show of hands whether the Conference members were ready to vote on this matter. It appeared that they were ready to vote on this matter. (See Motion #12 Floor Discussion on page 82.)

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS (PSAS)

Patrick Q.
*Associate Director
of Communications—Media*

Each Delegate received a DVD with all versions (English, Spanish, and French—30 and 60 seconds) to take home to share with their Areas. The Associate Director of Communications—Media noted that this DVD was not broadcast quality, but could be copied and viewed within the fellowship. The final broadcast version in high definition will be mailed to the selected television stations this summer. Individual copies for Area distribution to other TV and cable stations will also be available. The Conference members then previewed the three 60-second PSAs in English, Spanish, and French.

The Associate Director noted that all faces and voices are professional actors and actresses. The WSO has used full faces in PSAs for more than 35 years. The “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” states: “When appearing on a TV program as the relative of an alcoholic, a member can face the camera and give his full name, providing he does not reveal his membership in Al-Anon or Alateen.” The PSAs show actors representing people being attracted to our program. The Associate Director of Communications—Media assured Delegates that we are not compromising anyone’s anonymity because the actors are only portraying Al-Anon members.

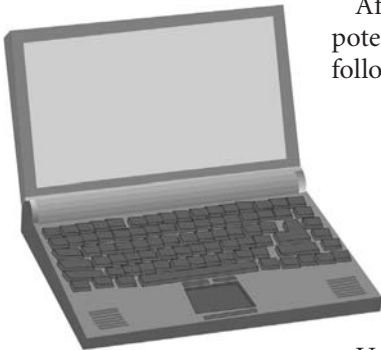
REPORTING TO THE AREAS

Following Hot Topic Breakout Sessions, Delegate reporters were asked what the members of their breakout groups plan to report to their Areas.

- The number one priority was to include diversity and cultural awareness. It is time to begin the conversation, educate, and act. The Policy motions, especially regarding Alateen, are important. Announce the chat room meetings for Alateens.
- Diversity, property ownership, and the continuing discussion regarding restructuring the Conference structure. Convey the spiritual tone of the Conference.
- Diversity, including the suggestion to have an Area inventory, and the Policy motions.
- How to get people in our Area to do their service position and how to address the situation if they are not doing their service position.
- TEAM events! The Open Policy Committee meeting discussion regarding groups not following the Traditions.

TASK FORCE ON TECHNOLOGY

Frank R.
Task Force Chairperson



In an ever-changing world, technology is becoming more a part of our lives, but not all members involved in service have the skills to utilize technology. Some members do not have computers and others who do, use their computers solely to access e-mail.

The Task Force was charged with developing a checklist to include the general knowledge necessary to utilize the most common types of technology that would be of benefit to Delegates and other members in service. The Task Force was asked to define the terms used in the checklist, and to make the list basic enough so that a person without any technical knowledge could learn from it. The Task Force included a list of challenges and possible solutions that utilize technology to benefit the fellowship, such as translation, reaching the hearing-impaired, distance, and presentations.

After answering the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions on the topic and brainstorming potential strategies, the Task Force suggested a number of ideas and grouped them according to the following categories:

- Data storage
- E-mail
- Presentations—delivery options
- e-Communities
- Excel
- Word
- Conference calls
- Skype

Using two computers, members of the Task Force presented a skit that illustrated some of the challenges members in service face. The skit, “We Want You to Succeed,” included an overview of how to create a PowerPoint presentation, how to hold a meeting via conference call in order to reach members in remote areas, and how to create a database for Area Group Records.

Following the skit, the floor was opened to Conference members.

Have any of these tips been tailored for Mac users?

Not at this time.

- I came onto the Board having never done a PowerPoint, but I learned because I just went in one day and started playing around with it. If I can do it, you can do it!
- I had similar challenges, but we can ask questions and get a buddy who can help us learn. Start with the basics and expand your knowledge as needed.
- You don’t have to do it yourself. You could give an outline to someone who has PowerPoint experience and ask that person to create the slides. I don’t know how a car works, but I know how to turn a key.
- I have found that I just need to be willing.

Following the discussion, Conference members received several handouts that listed tips for various forms of technology, as well as challenges members may encounter and possible solutions. The skit and PowerPoint are available to Conference members.

TEAM—TOGETHER EMPOWERING AL-ANON MEMBERS —TASK FORCE

Judy P.
Task Force Chairperson

In the past, Regional Service Seminar (RSS) events were suspended the year of an Al-Anon International Convention. In 2008, the Board of Trustees developed a questionnaire for Delegates to gather information in their Areas regarding RSSs. The Board of Trustees took advantage of this time to evaluate whether or not RSSs were meeting the needs of our fellowship.

A Thought Force was appointed to assemble all of the information into a Knowledge-Based Decision-Making format. After several discussions, the Board of Trustees formed a Task Force which was charged to develop a service event that better met the needs of the Areas and their members.

The TEAM (Together Empowering Al-Anon Members) event was introduced at the 2009 World Service Conference. A TEAM event is a partnership between an Area(s) and the World Service Office (WSO), with the aim of providing an opportunity for Al-Anon and Alateen members to learn more about service and the Al-Anon program. The Area and WSO Task Force work together to plan an agenda of workshops and presentations that address the Area's specific needs and expand members' understanding of our worldwide fellowship. TEAM events are sponsored by the Area(s) and the WSO.

The idea energized Conference members and many were ready to go home and schedule an event in their Area. As of this date, there are six TEAM events scheduled and several others in the initial phase of planning. Several members have asked when the RSS event will start up again, the answer is that RSSs have been replaced with the new TEAM events.

Following the introduction, the Task Force presented a skit depicting the Area's initial process of planning to hold a TEAM event. A PowerPoint slideshow was then presented to further clarify the how the Area and WSO partner to hold a TEAM event. Some key points are:

- The acronym TEAM stands for Together Empowering Al-Anon Members. The Area and WSO work together to create the event name. The WSO's contribution is the TEAM logo, with or without the three languages. The logo identifies the event as one where the Area(s) is partnering with the WSO. The partnering Area(s) can personalize the event name by including one or more nouns either before **or** after the TEAM logo. Examples of TEAM names are available on the TEAM Host Committee page on the Members' Web site.
- The Area and WSO select the agenda topics. For its portion of the agenda, the WSO has already selected three presentations for TEAM events: "Giving—Our Spiritual Link to Gratitude—*Al-Anon world services in action*" and "Trustee Search," plus a 15-minute talk by each of the three WSO Task Force members. The additional topics are up to the Area; the Area Assembly or AWSC meeting discusses what topics would be beneficial to members.
- A TEAM event can be a stand-alone event or held before or after another Al-Anon event; TEAM events cannot be held in the middle of another event. TEAM events have their own event flyers and, if applicable, registration fee.
- The Area is responsible for any costs associated with the facility, equipment rental, registration, publicity, etc. The Area may charge a registration fee to cover these expenses. The WSO is responsible for the travel costs and hotel for the WSO Task Force and for the general session presentations.
- Information about holding TEAM events is available on the Members' Web site: www.al-anon.alateen.org/members.



Conference members were given an opportunity to ask questions:

What is the role of the host committee?

Once the Area, AWSC, or Assembly decides to hold a TEAM event, a discussion regarding possible topics takes place.

Does the WSO do the presentations?

The WSO makes a commitment to do 6 to 8 hours of presentations. The WSO welcomes shared leadership and will work with members in the Area to present a session. The Area can plan for additional sessions, if desired. Once the topics are agreed to the host committee plans the event in collaboration with the WSO.

Is translation equipment available from the WSO for the Spanish-speaking population?

The WSO has limited translation equipment available, however, the Area is responsible for the actual translation at the event.

How far ahead do we have to plan with the WSO?

A minimum of six months—keeping in mind that the more time you allow to plan ahead, the better chance you have of getting your first choice of dates.

THOUGHT FORCE ON CURRENT CONFERENCE STRUCTURE

Roger C.
Chairperson, Trustee

The Thought Force's charge was to: Brainstorm ways to identify the diverse needs of our fellowship; use the five questions in the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) process to gather information that will assist in developing the strategies; develop a series of strategies to create a Conference structure that would address these diverse needs and help Areas achieve full representation from their Delegate; and include the pros and cons of each strategy.

After reviewing the 2008 and 2009 issues of the *Conference Summary*, the Thought Force concluded that three key issues pertain to the Conference structure at both the World Service Conference (WSC) and Area levels: Communication, Participation, and Representation.

Based on the results of a brainstorming session, the Thought Force developed six strategies for changing the Conference structure.

The first strategy involves plotting all the groups in the U.S. and Canada on a large map and using the patterns that emerged as a basis for creating new Areas. This strategy could be used to develop a completely new set of Areas.

Pros: This strategy would be helpful in arranging new Areas or for deciding on boundary changes between Areas. Areas could be arranged to optimize communication and improve participation and representation.

Cons: Using this approach to create new Areas from scratch would involve a huge amount of work and could cause disputes in the fellowship.

Strategy number two involves allowing Areas with more than 400 groups to split. Page 128 of the *2006-2009 Service Manual* states, "A state, province, or territory having more than 400 groups may petition the Conference to divide and send an additional Delegate to the Conference (see Article 6. B. of the Conference Charter)." Of course, once a state, province, or territory has split, the resulting Areas are no longer a state, province, or territory, and so they cannot split again. This strategy focuses on Areas, rather than states, provinces, or territories, and so would permit further splits.

Pros: This strategy would provide a solution for large Areas; Assemblies would be smaller and more personal, which could lead to improved communication, increased participation, and provide better representation.

Cons: This may not be the solution since some Areas with 500 or more groups could split and have chosen not to do so; Areas splitting could be an ongoing problem and the WSC could become too large.

The third strategy also takes the focus off of states and provinces by allowing smaller Areas to combine.

Pros: Small Areas could move away from state boundaries and consider a larger Area with a larger volunteer base. Fewer Delegates would reduce WSC costs and help to keep the size of the WSC manageable.

Cons: Some states or provinces may not want to lose their identity. A combination of Areas would require careful planning and procedures for transition to ensure that communication, participation, and representation are maintained.

Strategy number four involves using technology to create a virtual Area for remote groups.

Pros and Cons: A virtual Area would allow Area meetings to take place without requiring members to travel long distances. However, the Thought Force decided that putting all remote groups in a virtual Area was unlikely to make communication and participation easier because, in addition to being geographically remote, these groups tend to isolate for other reasons, such as culture and language. These groups need the support of an established Area and so existing Areas need to seek innovative ways to communicate with remote groups and improve participation.

Strategy number five was to consider the creation of a virtual Area for electronic (for example, on-line and telephone) meetings.

Pros and Cons: This strategy would provide a direct connection between these meetings and the WSC. However, not all members of electronic meetings live in a part of the WSC structure.

Most attend face-to-face meetings and so they already have communication, participation, and representation.

The sixth strategy was to leave the Conference structure as is.

Pros: Leaving the Conference structure as is has several advantages: spiritual representation is not about geography, the WSC ensures all Areas have voice, the structure currently works for the majority of Areas, and the current structure avoids creating any new problems.

Cons: It does not solve any current problems and it might discourage those Areas that think their needs are not being met.

Following a presentation discussing the strategies, some members asked questions and some made comments.

How small is the smallest Area and how big is the biggest Area in terms of the number of groups?

2008 numbers indicate that there are 32 groups in the smallest Area and 1,063 groups in the largest Area.

- I believe the structure we develop should be based on the groups, not by geography. I prefer strategy number one.
- My Area has split and cannot split again under the current policy. We have to deal with both a large number of groups and a vast geography.
- California South currently has between 1,100 and 1,300 meetings (some of which are not registered). Some groups are seven to eight hours away from Area meetings. I feel I am unable to adequately represent this number of groups. I will let California North speak for itself, but I'm requesting a third Area.
- I lived in Florida before it split into two Areas. It took 12 years of discussion before Florida split.
- The current policy is not equitable and democratic.
- We may actually end up with a blend of these strategies.

Why was the decision reaffirmed not to allow an Area to split?

There was a concern that the WSC would get too big and too costly. Originally this was 100 groups, eventually it was raised to 400 groups.

- Members tend to move toward a political solution rather than a spiritual solution in their thinking regarding splits.
- Page 126 of the *Service Manual* talks about the history of the creation of our structure. If we take a map and plot the groups, that might not make it any easier to get to the groups. Some Areas have geography that is easier to travel than other Areas.
- In 2009, we began the conversation. The Board was asked to produce a Thought Force. Multiple Task Forces will likely come out of the Thought Force. We need to prioritize these strategies.
- It takes six-to-eight hours to reach the central part of my Area. Communication, as well as participation, is very difficult so we try to keep all of the conventions in the central part of the Area. Some meetings have moved to another location due to restricted travel over the mountains. For my Area, it's not that there are too many groups, as much as the vast and challenging geography.
- Aren't we supposed to be thinking about Al-Anon *as a whole*, not our Area concerns? These boundaries are currently states (in the U.S.) and there are state laws to consider in Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) certification.
- Delaware has between 50-60 groups. I could see Delaware being the DelMarVa Area, because we are used to that term in Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. There is one strategy that is missing—what if we created zones?
- Restructuring the Conference is huge and even though we want to do something now, this is something we can't do really fast. With the Alateen Motion, the Conference talked about it for five years, but some Areas didn't hear about it until it happened. Talk about this in your Areas!

Following the discussion, the Chairperson of the Board asked members to prioritize the strategies for additional consideration. Before voting, a seventh option of "Other" was added to the list. Conference members could vote for two topics. The results were:

- Plotting all groups in our service structure on a map, 35 votes
- Allowing Areas with more than 400 groups to split, 63 votes
- Allowing smaller Areas to combine, 29 votes (tied for third)
- Other, 29 votes (tied for third)

THOUGHT FORCE TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE DELEGATE AND THE AWSC

Kay R.

*Thought Force Chair
Hawaii, Panel 49, Delegate*

The Thought Force was charged with developing strategies to strengthen the relationship between the Delegate, the Area Chair, and Area World Service Committee, to eliminate confusion and duplication of effort or responsibility.

Members of the Thought Force reviewed the duties of the Delegate, Area Chair, and other members of the Area World Service Committee (AWSC) that are listed in the “World Service Handbook” section of the *Service Manual*. The primary purpose of the AWSC is to plan for the general improvement of both the Assembly and the groups.

The Delegate is the link between the Assembly and the World Service Conference and the Assembly is the link between the groups and the Delegate. When the purpose of the AWSC becomes diluted because of disagreements, personal agendas, and lack of clarity in members’ respective roles, general disharmony occurs and could carry over into the Assembly.

The Thought Force’s job was, in essence, to do what this year’s Conference theme expresses so beautifully: develop ways for the group conscience at the AWSC level to expand the circle of hope by strengthening the relationships between the Delegate, Area Chairperson, and the AWSC.

Members of the Thought Force strategized ways in which positive interactions could be reinforced so that members in the Areas could work harmoniously with one another. If successful, these strategies could lead to the elimination of confusion and duplication of effort or responsibility for many individuals. In addition, the Thought Force was also asked to consider the AWSC as a whole.

After answering the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making questions, the Thought Force developed the following strategies.

1. Define roles and responsibilities for service positions in your Area and revisit them on an ongoing basis.
2. Improve communication: Define when and how communications will occur (e-mail, e-group, AWSC meetings, phone calls, face-to-face, etc.).
3. Encourage Delegates, Officers, and Coordinators to have and utilize Service Sponsors.
4. Invest in leadership development and education about our Legacies.
5. Engage in strategic planning for the Area. As a team, develop goals, objectives, strategies, and a vision and mission statement for the Area. Include ways in which the Delegate, Area Chair, and AWSC fit into the strategies.
6. Sponsor AWSC orientation gatherings.
7. Do teambuilding activities to get to know one another personally and to understand one another’s style and approach to things.

After presenting the strategies to the Conference, members of the Thought Force posed the following question for discussion.

In your mind, what are the key strategies to strengthen the relationship between the Delegate, the Area Chairperson, and the AWSC?

Conference members’ comments included:

E-communities is a wonderful tool. The problem is that the Delegate sees all the information the Area Coordinator receives, but the Area Chairperson does not. In my Area, the Coordinators report to the Area Chairperson, not the Delegate. This puts the Delegate in an awkward position.

Each Coordinator should have the ability to communicate electronically.

The Delegate does not run the Area. I will take this idea back and ask our Area Chairperson if this could be presented at AWSC.

In my Area, the roles of Delegate and Area Chair are clearly defined and we acknowledge where we support one another.

Our Area’s Past Delegates have implemented a lot of shared leadership. It is my responsibility as Delegate to keep the Area Chairperson informed.

We are all having trouble finding capable people to serve at all levels of service. We implemented an interim service seminar that moves around the state to train future trusted servants. The seminar didn’t work because it was like preaching to the choir—only members in service participated. We need to have job descriptions. We need to use conference calls.

We could use résumés as we do for selecting Trustees.

Whenever possible, the Area Chair and Delegate share a room to allow time for conversations. We have a Coordinator breakfast where each Officer meets with two Coordinators.

Call Coordinators between Area meetings. Ask them if there are any barriers that keep them from doing their job.

Part of the problem seems to be that not all AWSCs are set up in the same manner. Some Delegates choose their Area Coordinators, some Area Chairs select the Coordinators, and some Areas elect the Coordinators.

My Area has guidelines for what to do if people are not doing their jobs. We have implemented the process before a problem occurs.

The Area Chair has some strengths and I have others, so we complement each other with our gifts.



DELEGATES (PANEL 48)

Sharon B., Alaska

When I came to Al-Anon, I had nothing to celebrate. I even had a hard time smiling. I had forgotten how to hold people close to me without constantly thinking of ways to change them so they could be more acceptable to me. I only operated on my view of other people's behavior, and their behavior was definitely wrong. My life was ever shrinking into a pit of despair, loneliness, and isolation. I had no hope.

After getting a Sponsor, my recovery took off. I was asked to participate in my own recovery, which required that I get active. We started working the Steps and Traditions. I craved a fellowship to belong to, so my Sponsor helped me start a new group, and she asked me to be a GR. What was that? "Grr" came to mind.

As I continued to work with my Sponsor, "Grr" surfaced again and again, since I had to learn how to do things that were way too uncomfortable or difficult, and because she told me exactly what I needed to hear. She asked me to attend a district meeting, which didn't exist. So I participated in forming a district and was elected Treasurer. Now on to handling money, what a concept! I was afraid about my own finances, since I had yet to learn to rely on God for all things.

Then my Sponsor asked me to attend an Area Assembly meeting, where I was elected Alternate Secretary. Wow, it was a whole different world of responsibility because I thought I was responsible for everyone else. By doing this, I only took away other people's opportunities to grow, rely on God, and be responsible for themselves.

Since our fellowship was small at the time, some of us had to do double-duty. I am very happy to say today that we have an ever-growing fellowship, which doesn't need people to hold more than one position. Failure to share responsibility takes away the opportunity for someone else to step up to the plate and participate in their own recovery. I just love the spirit of rotation!

I have now learned how to accept, support, willingly, enthusiastically and celebrate the group conscience. When we say the Serenity Prayer, God arrives in each meeting at that exact moment. Which means when the reliance is on God, that no group conscience decision can ruin Al-Anon, Alateen, or A.A. as a whole. Sometimes each entity has some growing pains to work through to become closer to God. If we act as if we trust God, we become attractive to expand our fellowship through helping someone else receive hope, thus ever expanding our circle of hope!

Cindy H., Arkansas

I took a leap of faith when I trusted God in my service journey and stood for Delegate. At first, I received cards and e-mails from people I didn't know. Almost every card from a Past Delegate said, "You are in for the trip of a lifetime!"

This bothered me a bit. What if, at the end of my term, I didn't have the "trip of a lifetime?" What if I missed *it*? Or I wasn't spiritual enough to get *it*? What if my case truly was different?

Then I thought of a story. A spiritual advisor took a trip to the Dead Sea. He watched in personal horror as everyone who leapt into the Sea started jumping and howling. Obviously each one was having a spiritual experience. What if he leapt in and didn't have this spiritual experience? After all his service as a spiritual advisor, everyone would know he did not have *it*.

Well, he had come this far, so he leapt into the Dead Sea. He immediately started jumping and howling. What he didn't know before he took that leap of faith was that the heavy salt content of the Dead Sea makes it very painful for anyone with any sort of crack in his skin. His experience was not as he expected, but it was a life-changing experience nonetheless. It was the trip of a lifetime.

My experience as Delegate started in 2008. The Board was a few years into a renewed spirit of openness and transparency—apparently a break from past actions. I felt the Board and the WSO truly wanted to build bridges to the groups by strengthening the Delegates with good information and open discussions. I heard, "We want you to succeed." I was energized; the trip to Stepping Stones and attending the Al-Anon International in Pittsburgh that first year boosted my spiritual energy even more.

In 2009, we were asked to "Embrace the Legacies." I wondered if younger members in the program knew why the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts are called Al-Anon's Legacies. I started sharing about this at meetings and Assemblies. My personal spiritual bridges were expanded and strengthened. I do believe the fellowship was also expanded and strengthened as we worked our way through the agenda items.

This year we celebrate the 50th WSC. We also celebrate and embrace the group conscience, and in doing so, expand the circle of hope that only Al-Anon Family Groups can give to families and friends of problem drinkers.

I also celebrate expanded hope and consciousness because of the growth the last three years of service experience has given me. Like the spiritual advisor, I took a leap of faith. It has not always been the experience I expected. It has been the trip of a lifetime.

Gina R., Connecticut

I love our theme! Celebrate and embrace with me my hope and personal spiritual growth in service. Our theme, "Celebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—50 years of the World Service Conference," is an inspiration in my recovery process.

I looked up the key words in our theme. Celebrate is to have

a good time, and embrace is a hug. Group conscience is a number of persons gathered closely together who have a common bond showing fairness and honesty. Expand is a stretching of something circular, and hope is a feeling that what is wanted will happen—trust.

When I first started Al-Anon, I was a young wife and mother with a two-year-old and a newborn. My husband promised me he would not be like his father—a problem drinker—and for years I believed him—until our second daughter was born. I was an angry wife. I prayed to the God of my understanding and received my solution as I entered the doors to Al-Anon after my husband's treatment center asked me to attend meetings.

I found love, hope, and faith through working the slogans, Steps, sponsorship, and most of all, in doing service with other members—you, my friends. The fellowship has saved my marriage of 33 years and helped me raise my children to become beautiful and compassionate young women.

The Traditions and Concepts were introduced early to me. I became a Group Representative, District Representative, district and Area PO Coordinator, and Alternate Delegate. In Connecticut, my nickname became, "The Love Goddess," awarded to me by some past Delegates. They believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. I guess my passion for service has always been there. I like to have a good time and give hugs.

My love for the program of recovery grew. I knew my Higher Power guided my thoughts and actions, along with my Service Sponsor who encouraged me to put my name in for Delegate. As Delegate, I have carried the message of hope, love, and trust in a Higher Power. Through expanding our hands in a circle, we energize and build bridges for our worldwide fellowship. I will be forever grateful for the group conscience of our 2008 Area Assembly of GRs that elected me to serve as Delegate of Connecticut, Panel 48.

In closing, it has been a spiritual awakening and an adventure of a lifetime. A big hug to all my fellow Conference members, and happy 50th Anniversary to our World Service Conference, the active voice and the effective group conscience of our society in world affairs.

Berta R., Idaho

I am honored to be standing here before you today participating in the 50-year celebration of the World Service Conference.

Fifty years ago, I was five years old; 26 long years would pass before I was told by someone that there was a place for me. It took two more years before I had enough courage to find that place for me at my first Al-Anon meeting. I will be forever grateful to the one who handed me a telephone number and said, "Call her . . . and go there!"

By that time, the only group conscience I trusted was the one made by the committee in my head! I had placed all of my hope in the circle of a wedding band, in circles of broken promises, circles of emotionally unavailable relationships, and I drowned myself in circles of failure and self-pity. I was told one time that an acronym for "HOPE" meant "Hang On, Pain Ends." That was certainly true for me.

Last year when I reached the hotel in Virginia Beach, it was dark outside. When I opened the door to the room and heard the sound of the ocean, I was overcome with excitement and wonder. The next morning, as I observed the sun come up over the ocean, I questioned how a wallflower from a small town in Idaho ended up on her knees in front of the Atlantic Ocean, thanking God for her involvement in the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon Family Groups.

I got here just like the rest, because someone, somewhere reached out to invite me into their circle of hope. Today I embrace the group conscience. The previous group in my head has been replaced by knowledge of the Legacies, the voice of my Sponsor, my own experiences and those of other members, along with my Higher Power in my heart. Together we reach out to others, inviting them into the unending circle of love that this program has to offer. Tours to the past and bridges to the future are etched in my memory and my heart from this experience. I know I cannot keep what I have unless I give it away, just as it was given to me.

Thank you, all, for being a part of my Al-Anon journey, for teaching me about abundant thinking, about sharing leadership, about trusting the process, about new terminologies, and for encouraging success for an adventure of a lifetime.

May you all continue this journey, carrying the message of hope to each other and those waiting to join us. Oh, and by the way, my acronym for HOPE has changed—"Healthy Options Positively Exist."

Marcy M., Illinois South

When I came into Al-Anon in 1981, I didn't have anything to celebrate. After three months, I stopped attending meetings. As they told me in my first couple meetings, "If I didn't think Al-Anon was for me, they would gladly refund my misery." That's exactly what happened.

In 1983, my life was truly unmanageable; I felt I had failed my family. I had two sons and a spouse who were all fighting the effects of alcoholism. Our home was in a constant state of chaos, and I was close to having a nervous breakdown.

I came back to Al-Anon in January 1984. I was looking for hope that the situation would change, and it truly did. When I took that first step back through the doors of Al-Anon, it was the start of building a bridge and expanding my circle of hope. As I continued to work the Steps, I became involved in service—a bridge to recovery. I have crossed many bridges to obtain the serenity I have, and it began when I searched for the experience, strength, and hope of other members who seemed to have the serenity I wanted.

I learned to apply the idea of a group conscience in my personal recovery by letting everyone have a voice in our home. Using the three Legacies has helped me in service work and has expanded my circle of hope.

My life has changed, and I have a reason to celebrate now. I have the opportunity to embrace the group conscience to expand my circle of hope in my recovery by encouraging others to become involved in service and take the journey of their

lifetime. It truly has been an honor to serve my Area and a wonderful experience to be part of the World Service Conference, especially this year to help celebrate its 50th year of support for us all.

Lorraine R., Iowa

Lucky *me*! I married an alcoholic and as the wonder of being married departed, hope departed along with it. Our theme for the 2010 World Service Conference, “Celebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope,” is fitting for someone like me who had felt abandoned and hopeless throughout her first marriage.

I started life as the oldest of nine children. Neither of my parents drank; and as I look back, I had no excuse for the way I felt growing up. I felt angry that people were always telling me what to do and when to do it. I always felt that I “knew better” what was best for me. In fact, I always had a group conscience going; me, myself, and I were always right or always picked on and I had a right to feel sorry for myself. I was never at fault.

So, lucky *me*, I married an alcoholic. I did have to take what I could find—that lonely figure crossing the grounds of the old capitol in Iowa City on a very late night in December singing a Christmas carol. I joined him and as you can guess we were married. We were so comfortable together in our sickness. No longer alone, we discussed our plans for our family. We decided on “no fighting and no arguing.” Of course, those promises were soon broken. This was my second experience with a group conscience.

Well, as time went on, I did get to Al-Anon and found out that a group conscience is an agreement of ideas on how to conduct ourselves as an Al-Anon group. Alcoholism hadn’t ever allowed me to follow through. Because of the loving inclusion of my fellow Al-Anon members, I was able to follow through. When we had our group conscience meetings (usually after a group inventory), I was able to be part of the voting process and follow through on what the group decided. It was here, in my Al-Anon meetings, that I found myself being able to “say what I mean and mean what I say, without being mean when I say it.”

Due to my renewed confidence in myself as a person of value, I found that people could count on me. I’ve become a person who can extend the hand of Al-Anon’s hope as I continue to recover from the family disease of alcoholism.

Again, I am lucky—I married two alcoholics and have two beautiful daughters. One of them attends Al-Anon with me, and the other is creating chaos in her world. I continue my Al-Anon meetings knowing that my happiness depends on me and my relationship with my Higher Power. How can I say that Al-Anon works if I don’t insist on enjoying life?

Clif B., Louisiana

What a three-year journey: 2008 “Build Bridges—Energizing Our Spiritual Quest”; 2009 “Embrace the Legacies—Our Spiritual Bridges to Expand the Future”; and finally 2010 “Cel-

ebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—50 years of the World Service Conference.”

Coming into the program, my life was shattered by an alcoholic wife, daughter, and stepdaughter. I could only focus on their lives and how they were ruining their futures. My expectations for them were exactly “my expectations.”

It took quite a while for me to focus on myself. Only then could my long, painful recovery start. Pain, pain, and more pain pushed me into the only place where I could go. Nothing else ever worked and my efforts to fix the alcoholics became an obsession.

Getting the focus on me finally gave me an opportunity to start my recovery. I plunged myself into the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts—Al-Anon’s Legacies. Sponsorship became my way to receive and later give back. Meetings became my lifeline to serenity, fellowship, and learning how to love unconditionally.

Celebrate—what a word to describe my recovery! Every day is a new day to celebrate my recovery. Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—I see this as a way to embrace my group and be open minded to others. Tradition One tells me our common welfare should come first, personal progress for the greatest number depends upon unity.

I’ve learned to trust my Higher Power, whom I elect to call God, and let Him be in control of issues I am powerless over. The burden to have to fix everything is now in my past. I keep the slogan, “Let Go and Let God,” in my personal memory bank ready at a moment’s notice. I try to do God’s work every day. I am just a tool at His disposal to give the message to others. I learned that in Step Twelve.

My Sponsor taught me something that I say every morning to start my day, “God, it’s your day; let it be your way.” I am then free to accept God’s will without question.

In 2002, I had open-heart surgery; I felt very much at peace and knew if God was not finished with me, I would wake up from surgery. From that point on, I have found my purpose in this life, which is to embrace the Al-Anon fellowship and bring the message to others and practice these principles in all my affairs. God reveals how I can carry out my purpose—maybe it’s sponsoring others, doing service, and yes, being a Delegate. I know I am still on the journey of my lifetime until God is finished with me!

Melissa F., Maine

After many years in the program, I have come to understand that one of the most important tools I can use to embrace a group conscience is the practice of listening.

Before Al-Anon, I listened only for information that would reinforce my existing views. But in order to trust and honor a group conscience, I need to understand the views of everyone involved in the discussion, especially those with whom I initially disagree.

How exactly did Al-Anon teach me to listen? First, people listened to me. I sat in meetings where there was no crosstalk. I was shown respect no matter how far along I was in my understanding of the program. It was truly a fellowship of equals.

Once I experienced a listening environment, it was easier for me to reciprocate, especially to those to whom I did not want to listen.

My listening skills also grew through my service work. At first, I would attend a service meeting only if I thought something important or of interest to me was going to happen. Otherwise I would stay home. Over time I learned that my limited view was keeping me stagnant. And I was frustrated with my lack of personal growth.

For me, real growth happens when I move outside my comfort zone. Through Al-Anon service work, I learned that listening to those I would normally tune out is one of the greatest challenges and one of the most rewarding experiences in the program.

Now as I sit in Area meetings and work through complicated, challenging issues, I listen differently. I listen to longtimers tell stories about their experiences. This helps me understand the background and history on a topic.

I listen to members share their feelings and emotions, which allows me to appreciate the commitment people have to an issue. I listen to myself speak. Is my tone of voice encouraging and reassuring? Or is it hyped up and agitated? Are my comments advancing the conversation forward, or are my personal opinions adding only negativity to the dialogue? And when I'm feeling especially clear, I listen to my Higher Power. And the quality of what I share vastly improves.

I still fall short of my ideal Al-Anon self, but slowly a more trusting, willing person is emerging. The new, improved me is better able to participate and embrace the group conscience. My circle of hope expands, and for that I am eternally grateful.

Richard B., Missouri

My hope is for a better life for myself, my family and friends of origin, and my dear Al-Anon family of friends. The best way I can increase my odds of a better life is to practice the principles found in the group conscience process.

For me, group conscience implies participation, study, learning, openness, honesty, listening, and consensus. I sign most Area newsletter articles "Remember Concept Four: Participation is the key to harmony." Participation requires action on my part. It is in participation that I give back.

Study and learning require time and diligence on my part. At times, I am too quick to know the answer and slough off my responsibility to look at the whole picture. At other times, I build a case in defense of this or that. I have learned that too much or too little are not good for the whole. When I do the appropriate study, I find that I ask questions such as, "What are other points of view?" and "Are there missing pieces to this puzzle?"

For me, openness and honesty are the most difficult to practice. There is a fine line between my being open and being belligerent or hurtful. I have to constantly ask myself if my thoughts are helpful, to the point, and reasoned. Are my words just being "nice" and "politically correct," or are they pertinent and honest? My judgment isn't always clear on the range of feelings I

have about what others say. I need to balance careful evaluation with my Al-Anon learned concept of trusted servant.

I learned long ago to listen and let others express their ideas, concerns, and responses. I don't have to interrupt. I don't have to fill the silence. I can just sit back and wait. Sometimes when sharing on this idea I mention that 30 to 60 seconds can seem like a long time, and then demonstrate that by pausing for 30 to 60 seconds. It is a way to remind myself about listening and silence; it reminds me that patience is needed in conversation with others.

In the end, it is all about consensus—getting along and supporting decisions that come from the group conscience process. In a word, "collaboration" says it all.

The Suggested Al-Anon/Alateen Welcome says: "We welcome you to the Al-Anon/Alateen Family Group and hope you will find in this fellowship the help and friendship we have been privileged to enjoy." I have found hope in Al-Anon. It is my privilege to belong to this fellowship and to serve this Conference.

Kerri K., Nebraska

A circle of hope can mark the limits of my thinking. There are things that fall within the circle—those choices, ideas, and solutions I think are possible. And there things that fall outside the circle—possibilities I don't believe in and things I think can never be.

When I embrace the group conscience, I invariably see evidence of things I thought could never be. I see solutions that I had not imagined for problems I thought couldn't be fixed. I see compromise where I thought there was no common ground. I see sudden movement where there had only been stagnation.

By embracing my Higher Power's will for me and for Al-Anon as a whole, as expressed in the group conscience, the circle of hope becomes bigger. Every time I compromise, choose progress over perfection, am courteous even though I'm angry, and put a loved one (including some of my fellow Al-Anon members involved in service) in the care of a Higher Power, my own circle of hope gets a little bigger. I think the goal is that the more I embrace the group conscience, the fuzzier and fainter the edges of the circle get until someday I won't be able to see where I think the limits of hope are.

Being a World Service Delegate is something I was always willing to do, but it took many years of recovery and practice to become ready. My service to Al-Anon hasn't always been performed with grace and dignity. At my home group, my district, and my Area, I often felt like I had the answers and didn't need to sit around listening to the tortuous ramblings of others before making a decision. I wanted to act, I was ready to act, and I could see no reason to stop and think. This was more of a strangulation of the group conscience than an embrace.

It took much patience from my fellow members to put up with me. I eventually learned that the group conscience is not formed by me telling other members of the group what they think, but by other members of the group actually being allowed to think.

Al-Anon is much stronger than just one person, though, and it was strong enough to withstand my onslaught until I figured

out a better way. This is just one more solution I hadn't imagined to a problem I thought couldn't be fixed.

Judy K., Nevada

"Are we *there* yet?" As a child, I often asked that question. As an adult new to Al-Anon service, I asked a similar question, "Are we *done* yet?"

Sitting through an Al-Anon business meeting was painful. My head hurt, and I watched the clock. I had no patience or tolerance for long agendas and detailed discussions. I even ridiculed my Sponsor because she carried a briefcase to the Assembly. Then one day I, too, brought a carrying case.

Today group conscience discussions are educational and enlightening with differing perspectives. Learning to embrace the group conscience has been like learning to bake good cookies. Details affect outcomes. Quality—not quality *control*—matters. From you, my comrades, I learned to bake in service.

In the past, I simply wanted to get business over and done. Today I enjoy my interactions with you. In 2009, I participated in two Thought Forces. Each time I read someone's e-mail, I pictured that person sitting in his or her seat at Conference. I anticipated the conference telephone calls as if I were going on a date. When I heard the familiar voice of a Delegate, Trustee, or staff member, I felt a connection and was comforted. Thoughts of you rekindle my appreciation for an abundant life with trustworthy and honorable people.

I love being an Al-Anon member. I am energized by your presence. I am inspired by your insights. I see spiritual service saving lives. In this unity, I find purpose that extends far beyond me. I know I am fortunate to have found Al-Anon; thus I cherish any involvement in it.

This past December, two Delegates visiting my Area contacted me about meetings. What a lovely surprise! On New Year's Day, I called members in other states, just to hear their voices. These connections keep hope alive for them and me. The caring is mutual and genuine. We recognize our worth and value to each other. Our circle, to me, seems sacred and almost holy. I am privileged to be one among many and value my chair in this organization.

Before Al-Anon, I sat alone in the basement, warming my hands by the wood stove. Today I warm my hands in yours. As my term ends, I am grateful to say I am here rather than ask if I am there. My question today is "How could I be so blessed?" I celebrate our group conscience. We are sometimes wacky, sometimes even wrong, but collectively, we are well-intended and wonderful. Today I pledge to expand my circle, just as you expanded yours to include me. Here's to us—Al-Anon's largest group conscience—because we are worth celebrating!

Marilee P., Newfoundland/Labrador

When I attended my first WSC in 2008, I came with a lot of anxiety and doubt. Not about what I could contribute, but rather what I would find. I feared that my view of Al-Anon

would be altered; that I might become cynical; that I might not like what I saw; that I might be disillusioned; that I might find out at the highest level it was different, more "corporate"; that people in charge had more "expertise" and thought they knew what was best for the program. I guess I thought that I might find out that the "emperor had no clothes"!

When I look back, did I honestly believe Al-Anon was such a delicate flower that it couldn't withstand controversy and passionate debate?

Thank God I had a Conference Mentor who steered me in the right direction. His warmth, sense of humour, and loving support were my compass through uncharted waters. He cheered me on when I made my debut at the microphone, even though he disagreed with my position. When I fought to hold back tears, in what I thought was defeat, he comforted me.

What have I learned in these three years about myself? Plenty. I've learned that I don't have the patent on Al-Anon; it is a fellowship in which we share as equals. I have a stubborn and a resistant streak in me. If I just surrender, I will learn so much. Valuable lessons sometimes come packaged in difficulty. I am one of many. No one of us is more important than the other. We have a sacred trust to give to others what we have been given.

I've also learned that doubt is a good thing! Often after confusion comes clarity. Acceptance is a good lesson, especially when we disagree. Perhaps my Higher Power has a different plan for me. I've learned that my *modus operandi* is to whine, complain, get frustrated, and admit defeat—followed by tears at my ineptitude. Once I have hit bottom, I get up, very business-like and get the job done! It's just how I work!

We have a lot to "celebrate," not only in our fellowship, but personally. The word "embrace" reminds me that one of my greatest lessons is to embrace my discomfort and ask for my Higher Power's guidance. I believe the Higher Power speaks through our "group conscience," not mine. A "circle" has no beginning or end, no higher or lower. It always has the capacity to fit in one more. May our golden circle of hope always circle the globe to give hope to everyone, everywhere who is affected by the disease of alcoholism.

Dotty B., New Hampshire

Sometimes my eyes were welling up with tears. Other times I was laughing my head off. Conference participation runs a gamut of emotions. I love the theme of this year's 50th World Service Conference.

My circle of hope expands with every Al-Anon member I meet. I hope to give back to someone a portion of what I've received.

Embracing the group conscience is easy when working in a room full of Delegates and Trustees. The tone is upbeat and positive. We try for unanimity in all group conscience decisions and voting.

When the wording about the Alateen Traditions for the World Service Conference Charter were finally passed last year, I felt tears on my face for the success and for the Delegate who had worked on this motion for two years and actually withdrew

the motion until he and the other motion writers got it right.

I laughed the most when we played impromptu games while the votes (by paper ballots) were being counted.

I marveled as the Chairman of the Board kept her composure when we had a particularly long and difficult time rethinking and rewriting a motion, and then thanked us for our patience!

The Trustees and group leaders are wonderful. Everyone here makes this year a celebrated circle of hope.

The field trips to Stepping Stones and the World Service Office were interesting and, again, a time to celebrate. Stepping Stones broadened my interest in the history of Al-Anon. The bag lunch was my first chilly picnic of the year. The tour of the current World Service Office gave me an appreciation of the current discussion about Al-Anon's property ownership.

I am grateful to my Higher Power, my Area, all of Panel 48, and everyone here for this most memorable service position.

Chris M., New Mexico

My journey into Al-Anon was prolonged and tentative. I came and went away twice before I embraced the idea that I needed Al-Anon. It was a sort of group conscience that got me here—everywhere else I went for help they told me I really should try Al-Anon. I was hesitant to embrace it, but once I did, my commitment was strong. I realized that although it didn't appear so on the surface, I shared a profound understanding with the people I met. I wanted to do my part to support the meeting. I became a Group Representative. At my first district meeting, I asked, "So what exactly does a District Secretary do?" You all know what the answer was: "You'll be a great one."

I wasn't. Procrastination is one of my defects that I have not yet allowed my Higher Power to take from me; it did not help me to serve well as District Secretary. Still I learned from this experience, and in the next term went on to be Area Secretary, and later on to other Area positions. Slowly I learned to embrace the responsibilities of each position, and the group conscience, guided by a Higher Power (it certainly wasn't my idea) that got me there. Your acceptance has taught me that when I become willing to do the work, I feel better about myself, my self-esteem grows, and I feel more loving towards myself and the world. I become inspired and able to reach out to help make Al-Anon available to those who need it.

Service has been a big part of my recovery journey. I've traveled all over my state and beyond, and met so many amazing people. I've recognized some strengths in myself and learned things about myself that I never wanted to know. I've seen so much growth in others beyond my small home group. I'm grateful for the path service has taken me on, expanding my horizons to reach out to Al-Anon members far and wide.

I still struggle with procrastination. I am slow to embrace the responsibilities given to me by the group conscience that has granted me the privilege of serving, but when I open my heart and mind and remember the hope this program has given me, the joy of service propels me. I am in the company of people with whom I have a special bond; we all have something in common. We're all working on recovering from the effects of

living with alcoholism. We're all working on growing our faith and strengthening our relationships with a Higher Power. Even with our quirks, defects, and slips, we're all striving to become more loving human beings.

Through my connections with you, Al-Anon service has brought me an ever-expanding circle of hope. I am honored to be a part of Al-Anon's 50th World Service Conference.

Marcia B., New York South

Over these many years, I have experienced tremendous growth in my recovery. I have been doing a variety of service since I arrived in Al-Anon. In the early days, it was celebrating my Al-Anon birthday, serving as Treasurer, Greeter, and even taking a crack at leading a meeting. Sure, I was scared at first, but my strong relationship with my Higher Power—even in those early years—gave me the opportunity to take a risk in doing service.

When I did service, my attitude and perspective started to change. I came through the doors of Al-Anon empty and broken, with no self-confidence and very low self-esteem. Each time I took a risk and did service, a change occurred within me. I didn't always see it at the time, but I felt something inside me start to change.

As I continued in Al-Anon, so did my service. I started meetings, and then became a Group Representative and then a District Representative. I was introduced to the Area World Service Committee and Assembly Meetings and to the importance of having an active district. Since that time, I have held many service positions in the Area and have gained a sense of belonging and personal strength. There were some very challenging times, but through it all I learned a lot about myself and continued to grow.

My participation in service in those early years became the cornerstone of my recovery. Without doing service, I would not have understood how important the presence of God was in my self-discovery. I could have sabotaged those opportunities so many times because of all the fears I had. Learning to "Let Go and Let God," trusting in my Higher Power and the three Legacies, and attending many meetings, I was on a spiritual path.

I came to my first WSC filled with fear and anxiety, not knowing what to expect. When the Conference opened and we moved through the agenda, I was in awe of how it works and how I could share in the group conscience. I came back so excited and could not wait to share with my Assembly, districts, and groups the experience of the group conscience and working together to expand the circle of hope.

I cannot express how much I have learned through the incredible experiences as Delegate. The opportunity of meeting so many Delegates throughout the U.S. and Canada, the Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, WSO staff, and the International Representatives has been a gift. Everyone I met has allowed me to feel so much a part of this worldwide fellowship, and for all this—and so much more—I am so very grateful.

Leona W., Ontario North

In 1977, six months after coming into Al-Anon, I volunteered to be the Treasurer for my home group. It felt good to be viewed as capable of doing something. My self-esteem grew. Unfortunately, my understanding of the program of recovery did not grow. So when the one-year Treasurer term came to an end, my desire to keep “coming back” faded and the inevitable happened—I slipped away from the fellowship.

Throughout the next 12 years, I periodically turned up at Al-Anon meetings when my home situation was chaotic, but the desire to return permanently didn’t occur until 1992. It was in that year that the God of my understanding provided me with such a moment.

I saw for the very first time that it simply did not matter what my alcoholic loved one did or did not do. This program was my program of recovery. I was awakened to the realization in Step Two that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. The idea that I wasn’t entirely sane had never occurred to me before.

I returned to Al-Anon with a zeal that can be described as “missionary.” I immediately took on any and all service tasks that were available, but this time it was accompanied by threads of understanding. I felt totally alive and extremely grateful to be of service. I am so grateful to the many group conscience meetings that kept Al-Anon alive and well. Al-Anon is truly my program of recovery.

Esther M., Puerto Rico

Two years ago upon accepting to serve as Delegate for Puerto Rico, I confronted my fears and consequently grew. I learned about human relations. Most significantly my spirituality was sensitized, awakened, and nurtured. I was reborn to a new perspective of life—my life.

When I was guided to energize my spiritual quest, I was awakened to the spiritual essence of Al-Anon Family Groups. That set my spirituality on the path to further understand and feel the immense transforming authority of my Higher Power through Al-Anon.

The concepts of love, serenity, sincerity, trust, honesty, humility, commitment, and service attained new dimensions. I was engulfed by the strength of the concepts of abundance and the power of group conscience. Thus I concluded that fear is the essence of “need.”

Through service I can conquer my fears to help myself grow emotionally, spiritually, and intellectually as I continue to share the seed of Al-Anon with those who are still seeking help. I was amazed at the way challenges in the World Service Conference, as well as in groups, are confronted by inclusive means of informing, thereby creating a powerful and effective group conscience.

The awakening of “the me” that silently resided inside me was suddenly infused with new capacities to see and understand, to feel and touch the intangible. It sensitized my awareness of my strengths—the willingness to confront my character short-

comings and to seek successful ways of dealing with them by talking with people in my group and studying our Steps and Traditions. It quieted my internal voice, allowing me to truly listen and made me aware of my behavior, and of my sentiments and attitudes.

This capacity also fortified my understanding of compassion, which had nothing to do with feeling sorry for a person, but rather with the ability to sympathize and understand by looking beyond the obvious and seeking to accept rather than to judge, listen rather than advise, and love rather than show indifference.

Now that I come to the end of my term as Delegate of Puerto Rico, I thank you for sharing with me so many experiences that have helped me to build spiritual bridges beyond my boundaries. I have also further rooted myself in the responsibility to continue to practice the principles of Al-Anon/Alateen Family Groups. In doing so, I help make it possible so that wherever there is someone who suffers because of the drinking of a love one, he or she will find the soothing presence of a Higher Power and the gift of Al-Anon/Alateen recovery.

Barbara L., Saskatchewan

Before Al-Anon, I was a lost, angry, bitter, self-righteous woman who felt abandoned and worthless. Alcoholism is a great isolator, and I was sure that no one could possibly care about me—never mind understand how I felt inside.

At my first meeting, you told me that this is a “we” program and that I need never feel alone again. To me, the group conscience means “we” rather than “me,” and it reminds me that I am not alone. How wonderful it was for the first time in my life to feel a part of something. As I grew in the program, I saw and felt the power of the group and discovered the group conscience at work.

I learned that “we”—led by our Higher Power—had more wisdom than I alone would ever have. I learned that Al-Anon does not operate as a ladder, jockeying for position higher up and falling lower down. We operate as a circle, which can always open up and expand for one more. A wonderful image—a circle of hope! Hope—Al-Anon’s core message.

At times during my service work I’ve balked at accepting the group conscience, thinking my way was better! Thanks to my Sponsor, my group, and my Higher Power, I’ve learned again and again that “we” are more powerful than “me.” Letting go of my opinion and embracing the group conscience has taught me humility, helped me to check my motives, and has caused me to grow.

Some growth has been painful and a sharp reminder that our program is not a ladder, but a circle. As a Delegate, I can think of occasions where I felt very passionate about something I felt was wonderful for my Area. My fellow members listened to me lovingly and then decided otherwise. How painful that was at the time. I grow through such pain.

I am blessed to be on this journey of a lifetime in Al-Anon, and I know that through service work, meetings, the Legacies, my Higher Power, and my program friends, I will be able to

continue “One Day at a Time,” trying to do the next right thing. Thanks to the program, that hurting, bitter woman of long ago has grown into a much healthier person today! I am so grateful to be part of Al-Anon’s circle of hope and to be working with many others to expand that circle.

Linda R., South Carolina

When I read the theme for the 2010 World Service Conference, I started reflecting back on the lessons I have learned about my role in the group conscience process. The lessons were many and varied, and thank goodness, they didn’t all come at one time.

The top ten things I’ve learned about group conscience are: (10.) Group conscience meetings need to be driven by a culture of trust. An “us versus them” mentality breeds suspicion and mistrust. (9.) During any discussion, goodwill must be presumed. Nothing is gained by failing to be open-minded about the topic under discussion. (8.) Mutual respect is conveyed by actively listening to what everyone has to say. Don’t talk to your neighbor or expend brain power trying to figure out what you are going to say next. Listen!

(7.) My voice needs to be heard when I am adding new information to the discussion, providing clarification on a previous point, or answering a question. “I agree” is not information, but rather an opinion. The time to express such an opinion is when voting or when exercising the right of petition and appeal. (6.) An uninformed group conscience is worse than no group conscience at all. Opinions unsupported by facts can result in decisions that have no basis in reality, do not reflect the Al-Anon philosophy, and can be harmful to Al-Anon as a whole.

(5.) The knowledge of the Traditions and the Concepts of Service, which the seasoned members of the program have, is crucial to a group conscience. The voice of seasoned members ensures that the Al-Anon philosophy does not become diluted in the rush to do things differently. (4.) “Principles above personalities” protects both the group and the individual from unacceptable comments and domination. The exhibition of such behaviors has no place in a group conscience, whether exhibited toward the entire group or an individual. It demeans all present.

(3.) My personal opinions should not taint information that I am responsible for passing on to others. There are issues that I may not be in favor of; however, I must put my opinions on the back shelf and consider what is best for Al-Anon. (2.) All participating parties need access to all information. An informed group conscience dictates that everyone have all of the known facts before a decision is made. Open access to all information protects our “common welfare.” The appropriate decision is more important than who came up with the idea.

(1.) An informed group conscience has but one authority—a loving God. If a group conscience becomes divisive, a moment of silence and the Serenity Prayer can result in a miracle before everyone’s eyes.

Judy S., South Dakota

When I first came into Al-Anon many years ago, the only thing that would have registered with me upon hearing the theme of this year’s Conference would have been the word “hope.” I believe that hope is the underlying backbone of what Al-Anon embodies both to the newcomer and to all of us who make Al-Anon a strong, continuing part of our lives. Today I realize what that hope has given me: it has allowed me to live the first part of the theme.

First of all, to celebrate! What a novel idea—one that never would have occurred to me as I blindly struggled through life, miserably trying to control everything and also waiting for other people, places, and things to change to my liking. I had never heard of a group conscience, neither in an organization nor in a family.

Yes, I had been part of voting process, but mostly the decision-making areas of my life consisted of dominating people trying to push their ideas onto others. I wildly fluctuated from being the demanding, self-righteous one, to being an angry, resentful doormat. Al-Anon has given me the gift to begin to be and grow in understanding, open-mindedness, loving tolerance, and acceptance of myself and others.

What a wonderful gift the group conscience is at every level—from my family and friends, through the local group, district, Area, and the World Service Conference (WSC). I was amazed to watch and be part of this in action at my first WSC as we discussed the motion on the Alateen Traditions.

I carry the memory of the reminders we were given of working for unity as we respectfully listened to one another. Unity strengthens our group conscience and is a result of our common purpose. The strong, respectful, Tradition-backed use of the group conscience has brightened the tiny glimmer of hope inside my heart to allow me to be a grateful, willing part of the ever-expanding circle of hope. I come this year, humbly, excited, and grateful to truly celebrate being part of 50 years of the World Service Conference.

Norma D., Utah

It is indeed an honor to be here to celebrate the 50th World Service Conference. I’m proud to have the opportunity to serve in a program that carries the message of hope all over the world. I’m proud to bring to Conference the group conscience of my Area. I might add here that I’m not always in agreement with them; but I should be careful of what I say because, after all, they did elect *me* as their Delegate. I know there is a Higher Power who guides the group conscience of my Area and, therefore, I embrace the Area’s decisions. We have much to be grateful for and much to celebrate.

My personal story is a great deal like an Area Assembly. When I’m challenged with issues—be it money, relationships, work, emotional, or spiritual—there is oftentimes fear, worry, pain, anxiety, or something else that can potentially lead me to the wrong outcome. But when I surrender and turn my will over to my Higher Power, He leads me on a path to recovery.

I was in a car accident not long ago. It was my fault. I was distracted by some changes happening in my life over which I had no control. God had been talking to me for a couple months, and I wasn't listening. So I'm convinced the accident happened because of "divine intervention." God has never hurt me. I wasn't hurt that day, and I didn't hurt anyone else. The accident was just God's way of telling me to pay attention, don't worry, and that He has a better plan for me.

I have good sense, practical knowledge, and an education, but I also have a trail of debris behind me and there will continue to be debris when I make decisions without my Higher Power. I pray for strength and courage, and I thank God for being my constant companion in a personal group conscience I am so blessed to have. He gives me hope. He embraces me in a circle of hope and helps me to help others.

So now when I think back to the Area Assembly, I can do it with a good attitude and a sense of humor. There are many people in the room, just like me, headed for a car wreck. And by the grace of God, we all pull together, and we're guided by a loving Higher Power who has something better planned for us. So we take a group conscience and end the day forming a circle, holding hands, and praying that we can continue to spread the message of hope to each other and around the world.

Judy G., Wyoming

My spiritual quest of recovery from the effects of alcoholism began in a small Al-Anon meeting room housed in an old 1930s hotel building where you came to share your experience, strength, and hope. You were my first bridge in recovery.

As I crossed the bridges of service in my group, district, and Area, you showed me how to embrace the Legacies with all my heart, strength, experience, and hope. You showed me how to celebrate recovery. You had something very special and *I wanted what you had*. You were the circle of hope I so desperately needed to help me heal.

You shared with me the three Legacies. You taught me the Steps, which have been the core of my recovery. When my life is unmanageable, I use Steps Three and Eleven to ask for knowledge of my Higher Power's will for me. It's so amazing how well my day goes when I remember to work just those two Steps.

The Traditions help me in my relationships with my family members and my Al-Anon family, too. Tradition One and Tradition Seven have been the bridges I used through difficult times. The Concepts teach me how to live a more manageable life! I am humbled and grateful to be of service to the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon. My present and future have been expanded by these Legacies. How powerful!

You changed my ideas of a group conscience by showing me that it is not just a meeting for decision-making, but is also the way we keep the principles of Al-Anon strong. I now understand that this is the way each member, group, district, Area, and Conference come together as an equal. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of this Conference, which glows as circles of hope and leadership. Today I can be a bridge, an embrace, a servant, and a warm circle of hope to others in the worldwide fellowship of Al-Anon.

INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Peter A., New Zealand



I am proud to be here today at the 50th WSC as the representative of New Zealand Al-Anon Family Groups.

Al-Anon started in New Zealand in 1954. There are about 90 Al-Anon groups including four Alateen meetings, and this number has been fairly stable for some years. Our structure is similar to the World Service Conference structure, but we do not have districts. There are eight Areas, and each one sends a Delegate to the annual service Conference.

We have a General Service Office (GSO) in Auckland, staffed by two part-time employees and a number of volunteers. Our Board has eight members. I am currently the Board Treasurer and International Al-Anon General Services Meeting Delegate.

Since I am Treasurer, I have an interest in finances. Our annual budget is about NZ\$80,000 (US\$56,000), and the biggest part is used for rent for our office and salaries for our paid workers. The income is about 80% from donations and 10% from literature sales. There have been losses the last few years that have slowly reduced the reserve funds. At this year's Conference, I am going to discuss the idea of groups having a budget for supporting GSO services, like they do for paying their rent. The average donation per group in New Zealand is about \$420.

We have our own service manual and supplement it by referring to your *Service Manual*. We appreciate the leadership of the WSC and have benefited a great deal from visits from your representatives. We had a visit from Lois W. in 1972, and in recent years, two visits from members of the Board of Trustees.

In my time on the Board, we have taken on several new ideas that came from the WSC and Board of Trustees. Our Board has been looking at how we run our meetings and how to free time on the Board agenda instead of going over reports. The Board and Conference have adopted the Knowledge-Based Decision-Making process and are looking at strategic planning. We are offering conflict resolution workshops in Areas, and we are working to better care for our Delegates and equip them to be effective in their Areas.

When I first looked at the theme of this year's Conference, I didn't understand it very well. I hadn't come across the phrase "circle of hope." I have been thinking about it, and I found meaning in a connection with some recent discoveries in my own growth.

After a time in any relationship, I realize my partner is not perfect. Partners make mistakes. They sometime do things that are not caring for me or hurt me. I had the same experience in my Al-Anon group. When I first started in Al-Anon, those in service seemed like gods, but now I see we are all affected by alcoholism and are sometimes far from perfect.

Being around these behaviors, I felt unsafe. My natural response was to distance myself to keep safe. This is what I learned in the alcoholic home, and I thought this was taking

care of myself. The new awareness is realizing that I was harming myself by doing this. I had an experience of feeling strongly about how my own welfare is in being a part of the common welfare: being in the relationship is better than not keeping my distance from it, in spite of the fact that the others may at times fall short.

The change now is that I work on not being frightened by the behaviors and in staying engaged without reacting. It is quite something to begin to experience how I can be okay with the help of my Higher Power and not damaged by these things. I can be an adult.

I feel my place in the group with a new passion. I am not just doing it for the welfare of the group, but I depend on it for myself. I relate this passion to "embracing the group conscience."

I am lucky that my wife is also in Al-Anon. We met on a convention committee—a benefit of service. Recently, we have been using a phrase "duty of care." When we give ourselves to the trust of a loving relationship, we are also vulnerable to being hurt. We have committed to a "duty of care," which means we take responsibility to make that place of vulnerability a safe place to be.

My circle of hope consists of the unity and common welfare that Tradition One talks about. I need the group and my place in the circle of hope. I need to take my place and I need to not threaten or harm the circle. That is my "duty of care" to the group and how I can expand the circle of hope.

María del Carmen T., Mexico



I attend Al-Anon Family Groups because I have alcoholic relatives. First, I thank my Higher Power for allowing me to be back with you again, to learn and grow when I listen to your experiences in service.

The World Service Conference has been an invaluable guide for Mexico because, year after year, we inform our National Service Conference about new procedures and changes in the World Service Conference structure. Then we try to adapt them and bring them to life. You are our teachers and we are infinitely grateful.

In my attendance of the 49th World Service Conference, I heard Delegates and Conference members share their particular way of applying the Conference theme in their personal lives. As I flew back to my country, I reflected deeply on how I apply the Three Legacies to my personal life. I thought about how I could transmit the importance to the members of the groups in Mexico, to understand that our program is not only

a Twelve Step program like many others. It is a program of 36 principles that we decided to make a part of our daily life. It's a transformation. In my case, I came back with a more open mind to change. To allow the Higher Power to take care of my alcoholic relatives, I started a non-intervention plan: no more complaints, no more control, and more understanding and support for my alcoholic husband and children.

It was also necessary to accept the depression of my older sister who is close to death, and to give her the love and understanding that she needs at this moment.

This year was not easy; I faced the death of my Sponsor; at first it was real panic. However, my Higher Power gave me the gift of sobriety for my younger son and the arrival of a grandson, who will be born on April 14. The disease progresses, but I can face it with understanding thanks to the decision to continue being active in service. Service for me is not a loading, it's an unloading.

I discovered how to apply the Twelve Concepts of Service to my personal life. This was the main spiritual bridge that opened my mind. The application of the Five Warranties are my five ideals, I try to obtain that balance when I make decisions.

In February, we held our 37th National Service Conference with an attendance of 36 Delegates throughout the country, the Board of Trustees, Regional Trustees, Trustees at Large and General Service Office Staff. During that week, all the information was given; we carried out workshops, working tables, open

meetings; we presented all aspects of the 49th World Service Conference. We received the approval and encouraging words from the Delegates who visited our office; they saw the progress of the renovation plan that will end in May. In the coming months, all such information will be given in the Area Conferences with the presence of their Regional Trustee. The presence of the Regional Trustee has demonstrated to be very useful to the Areas since we applied of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making for the resolution of conflicts that appear.

Our spiritual bridge with the fellowship of Alcoholic Anonymous continues to strengthen because we understand the importance of the effective communication and we have obtained very good results.

The next July we will carry out our Regional Service Seminar in Tijuana, Baja California; we are expecting the attendance of members of Arizona and California. We will plan the topics according to the needs presented by the Areas.

Like in the WSC and the WSO, in Mexico our horizon is full of challenges and projects. Also in Mexico we breathe towards the future, a future that we are building through judicious study of the present, and the financial and spiritual needs of the fellowship.

I ask my Higher Power to be our guide to achieve success in this 50th WSC; I ask Him to allow me to come back with more understanding and love in order to share the message and for the Three Legacies to be with us today and always.



SPIRITUAL SPEAKERS

Claire R., Associate Director of Communications—Professionals

Besides being a grateful member of Al-Anon, I want to acknowledge my gratitude to Alcoholics Anonymous. Where would we be without A.A. and Lois to look over Bill's shoulder to follow A.A.'s example when she was working on the development of our three Legacies and our World Service Conference? I also want to acknowledge the wives of the A.A. Delegates who attended Lois's annual "A.A. Wives Delegates Luncheon" at Stepping Stones. At this luncheon, and later in 1960 at the A.A. International Convention in Long Beach, California, Lois proposed the idea of creating Al-Anon's World Service Conference to the A.A. Delegate's wives. They may have been small in terms of number, but their courage to move our fellowship forward was mighty.

My story this evening is more along the lines of celebrating the 50th World Service Conference (WSC) and our three Legacies, rather than my personal recovery story. I am the Conference member who has attended the most consecutive number of WSCs. I found it hard to believe that this Conference is the 25th WSC I've attended—from 1984-1986 as the New Mexico Panel 24 Delegate and from 1988-present as WSO staff. The years zipped by—one Conference at a time. I've never really thought about the retrospective of WSCs that I have, but remember, these are my memories and my interpretation of what happened.

I came to my first Conference in the middle of my mid-life crisis. In many ways, I think the Conference was having the same experience. My personal life was a three-ring circus between my mother's terminal illness, my job, and my relationship with the second Mr. Right. I had only been in Al-Anon seven years when I became Delegate. By 1990, a few more rings were added: my relationship to my father, facing adult child issues, and delayed grief. But in 1984, I had stars in my eyes, thinking I was coming to Al-Anon "heaven." The WSC would be one big happy family, because we're all grounded in our Legacies. I was looking forward to seeing the WSO and Lois's shoe at Stepping Stones. I also had the opportunity to meet and see Lois as Delegate at the Opening Dinner and at Stepping Stones. I didn't know what to say to her except, "Thank you."

I was naïve and scared. How would I get out of La Guardia to Tarrytown? I didn't know enough about the Concepts to be a Delegate. I was somewhat confused about my role. I came to the WSC from a specific Area and then learned to think and vote in terms of Al-Anon as a whole. It is the same kind of spiritual juggling act as learning to decipher God's will for me versus my will. My Sponsor said it would all make sense when I saw the Concepts in action. She assured me that I wasn't powerful enough to wreck Al-Anon.

I came with "great expectations" and walked into the middle of a serious "us versus them" controversy between the WSO and Delegates regarding a beloved staff members' resignation. It didn't take long to burst my denial "bubble" my first year. As

difficult as the tension was, our Steps told me even before the WSC that the battles from 1983 were not mine. I let go of the situation, so I could focus on being a Delegate in the present.

There was a lot of fall-out in 1984. Although the Warranties tell us that the Conference is not to take any personally punitive actions, I believe from what I saw and heard that the desire to move the WSO out of New York City began as an outcome of the 1983 WSC. The distrust was huge. To create an atmosphere of safety, 1984 was the first year that Conference members voted by closed ballot.

I learned quickly that each Conference member's interpretation of the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts vary. Other things—like our perception of money, allocation of funds, and budgets—are also different because our experiences are so varied. That is a blessing because it reflects the fellowship, but it can be a curse in terms of how we interpret discussions and report the information to our Areas. And so, my first WSC quickly brought me back to the reality that even Conference members are human.

I know that everyone here is deeply committed to Al-Anon—the well-being and future of our fellowship. However, there is a line where a sense of responsibility crosses over into fanaticism. Defects of character, such as resistance to change, fear, and distrust, take over. "Trusted Servants" can easily become "Twisted Servants" who want to govern. One of the best suggestions I received as a new WSO staff member was to proceed with caution—many times in order to defend the Traditions and to keep Al-Anon from being diluted, another Tradition is broken—especially our Second Tradition.

Sometimes, it was hard to believe that God was watching over our WSCs and that His sense of humor and irony would prevail. The 1984 Conference voted to give Al-Anon's Twelve Concepts of Service the same accord as the Steps and Traditions. And there we were all of those years with controversy and repeated discussions about adult children groups and literature, providing services to young Alateen members, dual members, and the gay/lesbian pamphlet. Those stand out as harrowing experiences. My spiritual breakthrough was that in all the discussions about fear for Al-Anon's unity being harmed, I saw that the most basic principle of our program—acceptance of anyone affected by someone else's drinking—was being tested.

I grew up with doors slamming, yelling, parents getting divorced and remarrying each other, relatives not speaking to each other, etc. Avoiding conflict is second nature to me. There were Conference discussions regarding the Annual Report that were so heated I thought we would need a month to get through the rest of the agenda. The concept of having a "family meeting" was very foreign to me. But our Legacies, which breathe life into Al-Anon's group conscience process, have helped me to grow and to realize that family members may disagree with each other from time to time.

Our former Executive Director used to sit so quietly and patiently at the Conferences. She told me that over the years she had learned that people need to have the discussions and “buy into” an idea. People need to feel their opinions are being respected and heard, and to ask questions. We know we are still family, and we all want what we believe to be best for Al-Anon.

I’ve learned to trust the wisdom of our Legacies, to watch and wait for the group conscience decision, even in the face of my doubts and impatience. I’ve learned to trust and cherish my doubts so that I could see and hear a Higher Power’s will for our WSC. I have seen over and over again that the spirituality of the group conscience process at the Conference will prevail. As my second Sponsor says, “God works within us without us, and He’s never late or early. He’s always right on time.” Conferences are neither all black nor all white. Instead, I’ve learned to see the shades of gray. There have been many discussions and decisions made at Conferences that, to me, have been “Al-Anon’s finest hours.” Decisions were not made in haste—some took hours upon hours of discussion and reworded motions. “Fear knocked and faith answered” as we all grew from making our Legacies come alive.

Time takes time, but I have seen the Conference right itself and let its heart come through when we realized there was a need for outreach for gays/lesbians or a book for children who grew up in an alcoholic home. You could’ve heard a pin drop during the discussion regarding the Board’s Motion to have a 15-year trial of purchasing property in Virginia Beach. I’ve seen great courage at all levels of the Conference—the Chairman of the Board making amends to the Conference for the way the Board’s minimum requirements for Alateen Sponsorship were passed on to the Delegates, and yet an immediate affirmation from the Conference of the Board’s criteria for Alateen Group Sponsors. There was the resolution welcoming gays/lesbians into our program—the courage that gay/lesbian Delegates had to openly admit their sexual orientation to illustrate the need for welcoming gays/lesbians into the fellowship and validating their need by creating a pamphlet to attract gays/lesbians to Al-Anon. The recent discussions at Conferences that permitted changing the maximum limit that members can bequeath to the WSO from a percentage of the budget, to a process defined by the Board which allows the Conference to come of age as it takes responsibility for the Public Outreach projects to be undertaken from the excess funds that a member can bequeath in a lifetime after a small percentage is placed in the General Fund.

I have seen Conference members’ minds open up. It has happened to me many times when I came to the Conference thinking I knew how I would vote on a particular issue and find my opinion completely changed when a Conference member gave another point of view. God works through people; that is why it is so important to speak up at the WSC. Share your view, even at the risk of feeling foolish. Having an open mind is very important to our group conscience process. I’ve looked at plenty of Policy motions and wondered, “What is this?” and “What were we thinking?” and I was at the Policy Committee meetings where the subject was originally discussed! Add the grass roots perspective of the Delegate members, and a proposed motion can

be vastly improved, sent back to the drawing board, or dropped.

I know we have all grown over the years and continue to grow. I don’t want the tumultuous times of the mid-1980s and early 1990s to return or to feel like a “WSC survivor.” One year, the Conference was so harmonious that a Delegate called it “the Prozac Conference.” I think a few things have helped: there are early morning Al-Anon meetings where Conference members can bond with each other and center themselves before our Conference day starts. In trying to change the tone of our WSC, Conference members also approved changing the tone in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies”—to give the fellowship a suggested rather than a directive path for applying the Traditions. It took three Conferences and 20 Policy motions per Conference, and we all left the WSCs “humming.” Our conversations can be repetitive—as one former staff member described, “Take it in, take it out. Take it in, take it out.” The “Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon” have been a great help to me, especially the one on dominance.

There were times when I thought I’d lost faith in the WSC and made myself sick due to lack of sleep. But an inner voice kept telling me to “trust the process,” and “keep the faith” in our Legacies. Some of the WSCs began with a “clearing the air” session, so that Conference members could express what, if anything, was disturbing them from the previous Conference. It really didn’t work well. I think we got the hint one year when a skunk got into the hotel’s duct system in the General Session and nearly gassed us out. I think some Conference members were embarrassed to admit they were unhappy about something from a previous Conference, or they forgot what they were upset about in the first place. As it turns out, the “Clearing the Air” session was a start and led to an even better idea of having conflict resolution workshops. I think we all knew there was a better way and realized that a process was needed within the Areas as well. We really have learned to “talk to each other with each other and reason things out” in service. Delegates can now return to their Areas with better clarity. We summarize our discussions from each day at the end of our daily sessions so that Delegates will have a better idea of what is important to report back to their Areas.

I believe the use of Knowledge-Based Decision-Making (KBDM) has helped tremendously; we now acquire background information needed for a discussion and to decide whether a motion is really needed. My Higher Power helped me to have a good laugh when I asked myself, “What were we doing all of those years by having to first make a motion so that we could have a discussion?” I think KBDM has been a definite turning point in our WSC procedure and process. The votes of substantial unanimity have become even more substantial if you look at the WSC votes on motions the past few years. To me, that is profoundly spiritual because it reflects a Higher Power speaking through our group conscience. While there will always be some WSC members who are fearful about things like electronic meetings replacing face-to-face meetings, we are able to share information from our Membership Surveys that no more than six percent of our members report attending on-line or telephone meetings. Instead of fear-based discussions, we’re basing them on actual information.

Today, we take the time to go over the various roles of the Delegates, Trustees, Executive Committee members, and staff. I've seen much of the "us and them" dissipate with the sayings, "presume goodwill" and "trust the process" that came about in the 2000s. As some of the Past Delegates returned as Trustees, they recognized that there were some aspects of the WSC that needed to be revamped to bring our WSC into the 21st Century and improve the way we are processing the business of Al-Anon on behalf of the groups who have entrusted us to do so in our Concepts of Service. The WSC needed help and it took courage to bring in a consultant with objectivity and expertise about how a business meeting should operate for greater effectiveness.

So, here we are at our 50th WSC, and as a former A.A. Archivist used to say, "It is amazing we haven't killed each other off." A great cause for celebration unto itself! Christopher Columbus might be surprised to know that he was only partially right about the earth being round. It is flat now due to technology. Yes, we have our challenges. Technology has reshaped our world. It is here to stay. We can use it as our new best friend—another means of communication to extend Al-Anon's outreach and to stay in touch with our fellowship. While the fellowship knows about CAL, I've observed a disconnect from the WSC and its motions over the years. It started when we stopped sending all

of the groups a *Conference Summary* and has increased because many people are non-readers. I believe technology can help us bridge that gap for the betterment of Al-Anon's unity. I also see our Conferences becoming more educational and Delegates returning home with models to help their members understand such subjects as the three types of anonymity, the differences between attraction and promotion, etc. As the second great love of my life used to say, "God didn't put us here to stagnate," and as our Public Relations policy states, "There can be no standing still without retrogression." I have so much faith and hope for our fellowship because of the Conference.

You may wonder how I sat through so many WSCs. Don't I get bored? How do I remember what happened—isn't it all a blur? So, I will tell you my little technique that has helped with patience and trust. I think of the WSC as an operetta—the overture is the roll call, there is passion and love interests, trauma and issues. All the paper work we get is the libretto. My Higher Power has helped me to see the operetta through to its happy ending with a rousing chorus. Everyone hugs, kisses, laughs, and then returns home to share the experience with the groups we serve. The last line of my favorite operetta is "Blame it all on the champagne." And no matter what the drinker drank or who he or she was, in truth, isn't that how we all got here?

Sharon B., Panel 48, Alaska

I was born in Anchorage, Alaska. When the Big earthquake of 1964 hit, my world seemed not quite right at the time, it was a 9.2 on the Richter scale after all. That's how it is with alcoholism, cunning, baffling, and all powerful!

I remember my Dad experiencing episodes that I didn't quite understand. At those times, I remember him having bandages, bruises on his face, and walking funny. He drank and got into fights and car crashes. He would be crying out for someone to pay attention to him, but my mom kept us away from him.

When I was able to run past my mom, I would go and sit on my daddy's lap, I felt that I could make it better—even at that tender age. The obsession to reach him was very strong because I knew I could help. This yearning stuck with me for many years—just imagine, insanity galore. Woo-Hoo!

I went to church on a regular basis, and my faith in God was very strong, so I avoided the sex, drugs, and alcohol that was all around me in high school. Now off to college at 17. There I met my husband-to-be. Boy, was he attractive—he was always a-movin' and a-shakin'! He was what I wasn't, and even more so when he drank. I was in love.

We both quit school. We dated and soon found out I was pregnant and going to have twins! We got married and a month later the identical twin boys were born. Anthony and Jerry were so precious. Our diseases were alive and thriving in our home by now. My husband didn't drink at home, since I was there. I learned to attack alcoholism before it attacked me. I have alcoholic radar. I could find my husband anywhere—even in the crack houses, though he would park his car five blocks away.

Misery loves company, so I took hostages and I would drag my pregnant self and the twins under each arm, going to any

lengths to find him and make him come home. People had guns inside those houses, but I tell you I was the scariest person there. They would kick my husband out to make that scary woman leave!

This is the best solution that I could come up with to deal with alcoholism. My husband was so out of control, I had to control something. Those poor kids! So another child would make him be the dad and husband that I wanted. Beautiful Shawna was born and soon had medical problems, seizures, and was developmentally delayed.

My husband got sober and joined A.A. I tried Al-Anon, but didn't stay. I had to suffer for ten more years before I would try Al-Anon again. Slowly the dry drunk came, because he quit going to A.A. Of course, I wasn't the problem, so I didn't need any help. We had World War III in our home every day. Maybe another child would fix it. So Gabriel was born. He was an angel! He went around intuitively knowing what people needed and freely giving it to them. Anthony and Jerry were both smoking stuff and drinking, but mostly Anthony. Why did I think having more children would change the situation? Maybe it's a pre-requisite of learning how to be a sick Al-Anon!

My husband went back to A.A. He was gone when he was drinking and now he's attending stupid A.A. meetings nightly, so I told him to just marry A.A. After my husband had a year of sobriety, his dad died. I thought for sure my husband was going to start drinking. He buried his one-year medallion with his dad.

I constantly lived in fear. I was in so much self-pity and misery, which I realized later that I created on my own. I desperately wanted to change something, but didn't know what. I was

sick, tired, and fed up with everything. I was ready to divorce him since we both threatened each other with it daily.

I just wanted to be happy and loved, but I could no longer look myself in the mirror since I wasn't living by my standards anymore. I had thrown them out one by one for alcoholism. I tried even harder to make those around me live by my standards. Anthony even tried to commit suicide at the age of 13. I swore again and again I would stop doing what I was doing, but I couldn't. God slipped in there and used my husband to suggest that I go back to Al-Anon. I don't know how I ended up in an Al-Anon meeting, since I never did what my husband wanted.

In my first Al-Anon meeting, I wondered, what was wrong with those people? Why are they happy to be powerless? What wimps! They are just not asserting themselves properly. Maybe I better keep coming back to teach them a thing or two and show them how it's done. I later wanted the serenity and peace that they had, but I wasn't willing yet to do what they were doing.

I started attending A.A. meetings with my husband. The A.A.s always asked if I had a Sponsor. "If you can't beat them, you join them," was my motto. I got tired of being asked, so I had to talk someone into being my Sponsor, to get them off my back, so you know that didn't work out.

My Sponsor said, "I know you know Steps One, Two, and Three, so let's start with Four. I was in Al-Anon for awhile and knew that the Steps started with One. My relationship with my husband wasn't improving, my home life was not happy, joyous, and free, yet. What was wrong with me? How come he didn't love me? Was I not enough?"

I am ever grateful to those A.A.s since no one in Al-Anon asked me if I had a Sponsor. I knew I needed a Sponsor, but who? Finally, I found her. I was attracted to her recovery and wanted what she had. But I talked myself out of it by saying to myself that she was surrounded by many people, so how could I get close to her and ask. That was unlike me because I'm a tiger and will run you over to get what I want. So I picked someone else. Did it work? No.

I finally gathered up my courage and asked the person who I should have asked in the first place. I started to change by the simple things she asked me to do. Pray, call her, go to meetings, work the Steps, sponsor others, and take, make, and keep commitments. I was asked to go to three meetings a week.

How could I fit that in? What, spend three hours a week with God? She must be joking! She just didn't understand what I was going through. I thought I had to be home with my special needs daughter, Shawna, and Gabriel. I was the only one that could take proper care of them, after all. Then resentments set in; I tried to make my husband be the babysitter for my meetings. My Sponsor asked me to be responsible for my own recovery, which took the action of me surrendering to find a babysitter. My Sponsor asked me to trust God to find the person to take care of them. What a concept.

I remember, when in the disease, how willing I was to find a sitter to go out drinking and dancing with my husband. Where was that determination now? It had suddenly disappeared for recovery, because deep down I really didn't want to be powerless and still had some ideas. How was this program going to fix

what was wrong? I was so sad, lonely, and depressed, and I was somehow willing to go to any lengths to get better.

God helped me find the person to be with my children while I went to my meetings three times a week, which I still do today. I was experiencing God's grace. While I was on my journey to recovery, my sons' alcoholism progressed—especially Anthony's. He started going back and forth to jail.

Thank God for my Sponsor, who taught me how to have a God in my life again. Alcoholism slowly severed my connection to God. With my husband's and my Sponsors' help, we had to ask Anthony to live somewhere else, because we no longer could have him coming home drunk. This was one of the hardest things to do. Tradition One spoke loudly in my head, "Our common welfare should come first, personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity." I had to think of my other three children, instead of just Anthony. My Sponsor helped me visualize giving Anthony to God every night and saying, "Thy will be done."

I prayed to God. I just wanted my son to have a God, a Sponsor, and a program; I thought then he would be okay. That was my best thinking for my son. I had to surrender my will and accept God's will better. Anthony committed suicide by hanging himself in jail.

My husband buried his 12-year medallion with him. I was broken hearted and so full of pain. Two weeks after his death, my Sponsor helped me start a new group. My three-minute talk [on page 62] shares a little more on this. Thank God, I was working the Steps with my Sponsor, which showed me that I was powerless over my son's disease and could not manage it, a Power greater than me *could*. I just had to turn my son's life over to His care.

Thank God there are no accidents in His world. He has a sovereign plan for everyone. I then had to look at what I was doing and share that with my Sponsor. I was so ready to have God remove my character defects, so I humbly asked Him on my knees with my Sponsor by my side. I then made a list; I made amends to my son by writing a letter and reading it to him at his graveside. I continued to make living amends to him by treating my other children with loving kindness, tolerance, dignity, and grace.

When I got tired of being a mom, I remembered my living amends and also thought that I no longer had the luxury of being a mom to Anthony on this earth, but had the honor and privilege with my other children.

I continued to take personal inventory and when I was wrong, promptly admitted it. A lot of the time, I needed my Sponsor's help in this since I couldn't recognize my own stuff. I learned how to pray and ask God for his guidance and the power to do His will. He fills my vessel every day with exactly what I need. Now I just had to be willing to share my own personal experience, strength, and hope with someone else who was suffering.

Anthony's death taught me that we all end up with God; and who am I to set up road blocks, detours, and stop signs? God gave Anthony a better life by bringing him home to be with Him, right now. God is so merciful!

Anthony's twin brother's alcoholism then took off. He's been in and out of jail since his brother's death. It will be ten years

this year. He likes to drink and drive. He has threatened to do what his brother has done. I'm grateful to my Sponsor again to remind me to trust God and that God's right there beside him always. That visualization helped me to sleep many a night.

I haven't seen much of my son while he's been in jail. He is set to be released April 12th, 2010, while I'm at Conference. I will miss being able to spend that time with him, but I'm exactly where I need to be, here with you all.

God gave me a reprieve since Gabe doesn't do drugs or alcohol. He even went to Alateen and got recovery. He has helped me many a time by sharing his recovery with me. We've used a lot of humor when we get off track. I'm grateful that Gabriel was born into sobriety and missed seeing most of the meanness and ugliness of the disease. I just love being a part of his life by showing up with love in our relationship!

Today I continue to work my program with my current Sponsor. I work with others and they enrich my life. I love that I get an ever deeper understanding of the Steps the longer I'm here and the more I have to be willing to do. The Traditions have played a key role in my recovery and have given me acceptance of my personal contributions to my family. I was resentful about everything I was doing and now see it as being self-supporting.

What a relief! I'm living in less fear since God is my defense. When something comes up, I just share it honestly with my Sponsor. I recently lost my dad, and my husband lost his mom two days later. He buried his 21st medallion with her. I had to work the Steps again since my disease started to affect me. I thought I was a discharge care coordinator and an MD. Imagine that? I would have missed this bit of humor if I didn't share exactly what I was thinking in my head with my Sponsor.

Again I tried to place a person in God's spot. I do that even without knowing it. More and more I experience Al-Anon's

hope on a daily basis. I received the blessing of having a free and clear conscience by being current with my dad when he passed away. I made a face-to-face amends while working the Steps the first time through. You all have taught me how to show up and be a part of my dad's life, especially when he needed me. I went to the hospital many a time to support my parents even when I didn't want to. God gave me the courage and strength. God blessed our family with a reunion by bringing the six of us together for a picture, which I showed my dad the next day. He said, "Boy, I look good!" He passed away seven hours later.

In the emergency room, I told him that it was okay to go to God; he squeezed my hand right before he left. These are the gifts I would miss if I didn't work this awesome program! My relationships are healing. I love my husband even more today—mostly because I have learned to get off his back and not make him my security. I have learned to walk on my own two feet and live by my morals.

I am actually living instead of just surviving. Now I'm free to love him unconditionally. We have come closer together on a spiritual plane, due to praying and studying God's word together. I'm still learning how to accept my husband exactly how he is today, because my God is so powerful—if my husband was supposed to be different, he would be. I'm more quick to say when I was wrong and to make amends when I've done harm because then I experience peace.

My Sponsor continues to walk me through the scary times of learning to throw out lifelong conceptions that keep me from truly relying on my God, and to be powerless over all things. Then the things that I'm trying to have power over, no longer have power over me. I'm finally at peace with myself and those around me. My heart celebrates and I'm living in a circle of God's hope, and love—happy, joyous, and truly free!

Kerri K., Panel 48, Nebraska

I've been going to my home group since the spring of my sophomore year in college. I grew up in an alcoholic family and at the time, I had a father sober in A.A., a sister sober in A.A., a mother attending regular Al-Anon meetings, and another sister who had moved to Canada to start over.

I was feuding with my college roommate. Since she was pretty much my only friend, I was pretty lonely and miserable. The only thing I could think of was to drop out of college. I don't remember now how I thought that would help. I don't know if I really understood my decision at the time. Nevertheless, that was my plan. My parents were moving later that spring and I was going to move in with my alcoholic sister and drop out of college. I had it all under control.

I had been introduced to Al-Anon some months before, at an open A.A. meeting where my sister was celebrating a one-year anniversary. A longtime member introduced herself with a hug and invited me to a group that met downtown on Tuesday nights and was close to campus. I cringed; I wanted no part of it. By the time spring rolled around, I had become a little more open-minded, which is to say, a little more desperate. I didn't want my family to know that I was going to try Al-Anon,

though. Instead of reaching out to one of them, I called my sister's boyfriend, who was also a member of A.A. I asked him how I could get in touch with the Al-Anon member I had met at the meeting. He called me back with the information. I attended my first meeting a few weeks later, and I've been an Al-Anon member ever since.

Now here's an interesting thing. That boyfriend is now my brother-in-law, but I always like to point out that, at the time, he was just a guy my sister had introduced me to. I've always wondered why I chose him instead of a family member. I know that I was really afraid someone in my family would say, "I told you so," or "We're so happy," or express some other opinion in support of my decision.

I think what scared me was that in my sick and unhappy state of mind, I would have interpreted their support as a kind of blame. Yes, I really did need to go to Al-Anon because I had screwed things up. Even without understanding why, I knew instinctively that if my family got wind of my plans, I would have had to abandon them out of spite. It was much safer to confide in a stranger—someone whose life I had not impacted in any way—than in any member of my family.

The safety of confiding in strangers who seem to understand us is sort of how Al-Anon works. As scary as it was to admit to a stranger that I might have a problem, it would have been scarier to admit it to one of the alcoholics. I didn't understand back then that neither the alcoholic nor the family member is to blame for the drinking. I needed to find a place where I could get help and hide my shame at the same time. Fortunately, Al-Anon provided that place for me long enough so that I could learn there was a way for me to give up that shame by working the Steps.

Of course, I work the Steps with a Sponsor. I'm a "rule follower" by nature, so I've always been a regular attendee at meetings and I've always had a Sponsor. I also like a lot of structure, so the meetings I go to have a lot of structure and my relationships with the Sponsors I've had over the years have been pretty structured. I am comforted by structure. The alcoholic family I grew up in had very little and for a long time I probably overdid it adding structure to my life.

Today I am able to find the middle ground more often. What I can say in support of structure, though, is that when I was new, I was single and had no life—nothing to compete with meetings. I consider myself lucky that in later years, when I was married and had a young child, I had already established a pattern of regular attendance at meetings. This made it easier to leave the house on those nights when I might have otherwise felt compelled to stay home and keep an eye on things. Instead, I was able to leave the house and give my husband an opportunity to parent without my interference.

Joining the program at 19 was a little unusual at the time, although I never felt out of place at my meeting and always found that I could relate. Some of my experiences were slightly different for having experienced them as a child of alcoholic parents, but they were close enough to what I heard others share. For example, I heard many members talk about tracking the alcoholic down at the bar. Well, I couldn't drive when my parents were doing their heaviest drinking, but there were plenty of times when I had them paged to come to the telephone when they were out after work drinking with friends. Just like you, I wanted to know when they would be home. Just like you, I believed them when they told me, "Soon."

After a while, I should have known better, but I wanted too much to believe, so I ignored my experience. Instead, I would watch for their car coming up the street. I would count the cars and tell myself that I was only going to watch for five more cars. Then I would leave my post at the window and find something else to do. When five cars passed and they still hadn't come home, I would revise my pledge. I will only wait for five more blue cars to come down the street and then I will find something else to do. Sometimes I would count cars, and sometimes I would count the minutes. I always found a reason to move the line I had drawn in the sand. Throughout this process I would worry, always asking myself the question, "Where are they?" I would spend whole evenings this way, just waiting, watching, and worrying.

Sometimes I would have my own plans with school friends. Of course this presented a different set of worries. If I went skating or to a dance, I would usually carpool and the worry was,

"Is my dad going to remember to pick us up?" Other parents seemed more reliable than my parents and also seemed less embarrassing. It's hard to tell how much of my embarrassment was a normal teenage attitude toward my dad and how much had to do with his alcoholic behavior. At least some of it had to do with the fact that my dad didn't always show up on time at the skating rink on Friday night. Nothing terrified me more than the thought of being forgotten—so I worried. I watched the door and waited for him to show up. I worried about what would happen to me if he didn't show up. It ruined the last half hour of the night, every time.

When I wasn't worrying about my dad, I was worrying about my mom. When I wasn't worrying about my mom, I was worrying about the two of them and their fighting. Would they get a divorce? What would happen to me? Then my sisters started to drink and go out, so I worried about them. Why were they sneaking around with people they shouldn't be with and going places they shouldn't go? Why were they asking me to keep their secrets? They were going to get in trouble!

I know this is a time in my life when pleasing others became very important to me because I thought that in doing so, I could win that person over and make him or her feel better. The alcoholics in my life clearly did not feel good. I wanted very much to make them feel better. My intentions started out good. It's only after time went on, promises were broken, vulnerabilities were exploited, and resentments built up, that I began to want to punish the alcoholics.

Punishing the alcoholics meant becoming a bully. Not the beat-you-up-and-steal-your-lunch-money kind of bully, but the make-you-feel-stupid-and-ashamed-so-I-can-bend-you-to-my-will kind of bully. I became a bossy, dominating person who used anger, silence, sarcasm, and a snotty tone of voice to manipulate others—not just the alcoholics in my life. That's one of the realizations that brought me to Al-Anon. I had started to treat everyone in my life this way.

At the time, I wasn't living with active alcoholism. My roommate, the one I was feuding with, had also grown up with a drinker for a father. We actually had a lot in common. I had become so suspicious and controlling, that I was pushing her away just as I had everyone else in my life. That's what really made me see that I needed help. As afraid as I was of being blamed, I also did a lot of blaming others. In my situation, I no longer had any alcoholics to blame. The alcoholics in my life were getting help; I was getting worse.

What happened for the alcoholics was that when I was 13, my mother checked herself into a psychiatric hospital. Her doctor confronted my dad about his drinking, and he started attending A.A. meetings. My mother begrudgingly began attending Al-Anon. My sister joined A.A. a couple of years after that. By the time I started Al-Anon, we were beginning to look like a family in recovery.

Unfortunately, even in recovery, things aren't always what they seem. I had three years in Al-Anon when my mother called in a crisis. She told me that she was going to kill herself. I was very scared; I wanted badly to be able to save her, but I could not. In that moment, I was forced to admit my powerlessness. Not long after this incident, I got another phone call from my

mother letting me know that she had joined A.A. Given the circumstances, you might think I was overjoyed. On the contrary, I took it personally that she had “decided” to become an alcoholic. I felt betrayed, and I was angry. I felt alone in a family full of alcoholics. My Sponsor and other members understood my anger and resentment. As painful as it was, though, it was the beginning of my understanding of alcoholism as a disease and not as a choice.

I eventually married an alcoholic myself and adopted his four-year-old daughter. We were married for ten years before divorcing. He doesn’t think he is an alcoholic, and I really don’t know either because he was sober in A.A. when I met him. I do know that using the tools of the Al-Anon program helped me to detach from his problems over the years and to respond to his actions rather than his words.

I had a bad habit of reacting to his threats as though he’d already carried them out. This left me continuously planning for events that often never took place. It was an easy way to build up resentments because I felt like he was manipulating me. Learning to see my part as the one doing the reacting, I was able to change how we related to each other. It hasn’t been easy for my daughter to learn how to avoid the same manipulations, but I am able to share my experience with her and be an example.

My daughter has her own life with her own problems. She revealed to me a little over a year ago that she was actively bulimic and wanted help. While I struggled to figure out how to

respond, my instincts were telling me to throw away all the food in the house. Fortunately, I recognized this as a bad instinct. I recognized that I was reacting to her bulimia in the same way I would have reacted to alcoholism, immediately launching into control mode. I was grateful at that moment for an active relationship with a Higher Power and a Sponsor. Both of those relationships have gotten much stronger over the last year because I have had to let go of my child and her disease.

I want to close by talking about service to Al-Anon. I know no one in this room needs to hear from me about the benefits of service, but it’s something I always talk about when I’m asked to share my story because it’s been a huge part of my recovery. It’s really very simple. Some people hear the word service and they’re scared off because they think it means “obligation.” To me, service means “purpose.” I didn’t have much of a purpose in life before Al-Anon. Granted, it was a young life just starting out, really, but there weren’t many aspirations in it. After all, my big plan involved becoming a college drop-out, remember?

Being in service has given me a chance to have a purpose, build confidence, and set my sights a little higher. I was encouraged in service, literally. I literally was given courage through performing service to the fellowship. I used that courage to change and as a result, I am not the same person I was when I got here. The program works, and I feel really lucky to have had the chance to recover myself and make a contribution toward helping others to recover.

CLOSING SESSION

Mary Ann R.

Chairperson, Board of Trustees

Carol V.

Conference Chairperson, Trustee

In the closing session of the 50th World Service Conference, the Chairperson of the Board asked Conference members, “Do you feel that you’ve widened the circle of hope by embracing the group conscience?”

“I want you to know that it has been my privilege to spend the week here with you. I’ve heard so many stories of love and commitment to the Al-Anon fellowship and have observed that remarkable love and dedication in action.

“There are times when being a Delegate, staff member, Executive Committee member, or Trustee can be trying. When we all come together at the World Service Conference, that special bond we develop as Conference members lifts our spirits and brings new energy.

“The following are some of my observations this week: We agreed to disagree, and when we were wrong, admitted it; we exercised our right to speak; we agreed to accept the group conscience; we demonstrated respect for one another and presumed goodwill. And as a result of our exuberance, we heard the Conference Chair bang the gavel.

“I find it inspiring to be among Al-Anon’s leaders, and I know that some of you will be our future Trustees. You have brought honor to our fellowship.

“Some of you have experienced tragedies this past year and have had the strength and courage to move forward and carry out your responsibilities. I admire you.

“Now as we return to our Areas and personal lives, let us hold each other in our thoughts and prayers, and with the guidance of our Higher Power, draw on the support of our Al-Anon friends.

“Let’s celebrate and embrace the wider group conscience, and bring hope wherever we go. Thank you all for your confidence in me and for making this week very special.”

The Conference Chairperson said, “Let’s remember our Conference Theme and our Conference Goals and ask ourselves: “How have we done? Did we celebrate? I know I did! Did we celebrate 50 years of the WSC? Did we embrace the group conscience? Did we expand our circle of hope? Did the spiritual tone of the WSC prevail by the demonstration of mutual respect and acceptable conduct by its members?

“Did we as Conference members understand the purpose of the Conference, the relationships within the structure, and are we able to articulate Conference decisions? Did we fulfill our individual roles as Delegates, staff members, Trustees, and Executive Committee members to form that effective group conscience? Do you believe our Higher Power was present in the expression of our group conscience? Did we, as Conference members, presume goodwill?

“We need to ask ourselves as a Conference if we accomplished what we set out to do and what our pioneers envisioned for us to do.”

Conference members took a few minutes for quiet reflection to evaluate the work of the 2010 World Service Conference and to write about a particular session or activity that fulfilled the Conference Theme or one of the Conference Goals.

- **Cultural Competency:** The consultant shared with us what we are already doing right. He embraced Al-Anon’s goodness and assured us that, with some work, we can do this.
- **Motions 12 and 13:** These decisions reflected principles above personalities in many respects. We held the discussions in a loving manner. The discussions reaffirmed my faith in our goals and the Conference process and showed the strength of one voice.
- **Adopting the new RT plan:** Showed trust and the presumption of goodwill.

The Chairperson continued by asking Conference members to spend some time on their way home answering a more personal question: “What spiritual growth did I personally experience this week?” She encouraged members to send their responses to *The Forum*.

Following dinner, scroll presentations to the Panel 48 Delegates and the Spiritual Speakers, the Conference Chairperson closed the 50th World Service Conference by rapping a gavel on the lectern.



2010 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE MOTIONS

Background and Floor Discussions

Motion #9

In March, the Literature Committee considered the suggestion from a member for a Legacies workbook using sharings that have been submitted on-line for the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of Service blogs.

In preparation for recommending conceptual approval, the Literature Committee discussed:

- For many years, the WSO has received inquiries about workbooks for the Legacies other than Step Four.
- On several occasions, the Literature Committee received requests to reprint the questions from *Paths to Recovery* (B-24) followed by blank lines, as a reformatting of existing material, these requests were sent to the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee did not approve them because they did not believe enough members would be interested. If members already had the questions in *Paths*, they would basically be paying for lined paper.
- This new idea for a Legacies workbook, however, would be made up entirely of material never before in print. The suggestion was that it could include five or ten sharings from members on each Legacy, with a number of pertinent questions following each sharing, as well as space to complete a response.
- For more than two years, the blogs on the WSO Web sites (initially the Concepts Blog, followed by the Traditions Blog, and now the Steps Blog) have posted wonderful insights about our three Legacies. However, because they are not Conference Approved Literature, they cannot be used at meetings. Including material from these blogs in a workbook that will go through the process for developing Conference Approved Literature could extend the understanding and help members find in our Legacies.

- Because we already have more than 450 sharings to draw from, we have a headstart to the project. If all additional sharings for the new workbook are also submitted through the blogs, the workbook could increase interest in the blogs, as well as give members an unprecedented opportunity to read all sharings submitted for a piece of CAL.
- It would also be possible to release an electronic version simultaneously, possibly on a subscription basis. In this way, we could continue to explore electronic media as originally intended by the e-CAL motion in 2006.
- This workbook could help create additional interest within the fellowship in using the Legacies and in learning new approaches to applying them to their lives.

Conference members discussed the following:

Were the members who posted to the blog made aware that their sharings might be used again?

Posting to the blog includes information stating that anything submitted to the WSO can be used by WSO.

A member asked about the availability of previously posted Legacies.

All blogs (Concepts, Traditions, and Steps) have been open on the Members' Web site since January 2010.

Can you give us a time line for release?

It could possibly be ready by Al-Anon's International Convention in July 2013.

Following this brief discussion, a motion was made, seconded, and carried to give conceptual approval to develop a Legacies workbook, using sharings from the Legacy blogs. (See Motion #9 on page 90.)

Motion #11

In August 2009, the Literature Committee reviewed a suggestion from the staff of the Communication Section to consider revising and/or combining the pamphlets *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon* (P-33) and *Anonymity* (P-65). That suggestion was made in light of the new wording about anonymity in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* that was approved in 2008.

Since the majority of the Committee was interested in exploring the idea, the Chairperson appointed a Thought Force comprised of some of the Literature Committee members to further study the pamphlets and present recommendations to the Committee as a whole. The members of the Thought Force, using KBDM questions, shared opinions, ideas, and information for the next few months via e-mail. Among the comments made were the following:

- *Why Is Al-Anon Anonymous?* (P-33) was first printed in 1968. There were minor changes made in 1976. In 1982

it was totally rewritten. Minor changes were made in 1989. In 1998 the title was changed to *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* to clarify that it is our members that are anonymous, not Al-Anon as an entity. In the late 1990s, study of input from the literature inventory held throughout the WSC structure recommended only routine housekeeping changes. Aside from the title, the text has remained essentially the same since 1989.

- Currently *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33) ranks approximately 29/55 among pamphlet sales (with 1/55 being the top seller).
- Anonymity is "the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions," and an essential factor in Al-Anon's vitality and growth. The need to explain Al-Anon's position on this matter is not exclusive to newcomers or longtimers.
- The three Legacies are sometimes misunderstood

and misused as a barrier to our fellowship's growth. Traditions Eleven and Twelve are among those most frequently misused as barriers.

- The proliferation of Internet, e-mail, and social networking Web sites is complicating the matter of anonymity in ways that could not have been anticipated when the current literature on anonymity was being developed.
- Anonymity is still a major issue today, as it was in the early days.
- Revision would give members current information using current wording.
- Revision would help members adapt the application of our principles to changes in our contemporary environment, especially regarding electronic media and the Internet.

In March, the full Committee discussed the Thought Force's recommendation that the Committee propose a major revision

Motion #12

Based on the previous consensus (see Property Ownership Task Force discussion on page 52), a Delegate presented a motion to affirm that ownership of property is consistent with the Al-Anon/Alateen Legacies; to end the property ownership trial and retain the WSO headquarters property; and to ask the Board of Trustees to draft a motion for the 2011 World Service Conference that incorporates the spiritual intent and safeguards of 1994 WSC Motion 12.

After the motion was presented, the floor was opened for discussion:

I am concerned that ending the trial a year early will cause disagreement in the fellowship, like the Alateen Motion.

This was a 15-year-trial. That's what we said, and that's what we should do.

We own the property. We're asking this body to affirm this, end the trial, and retain the property, and we asking the Board of Trustees to come to the next WSC with the method to continue to own and retain the property. We have not discussed this [the BOT's] procedure here.

I was at the WSC when the Conference affirmed the Board of Trustees' minimum safety and behavioral requirements. I can tell you that this is a very, very different process from what the membership experienced before. This time, I feel as if I have heard all the information and have been a part of the process.

When I go back home, it will be viewed as a matter of trust.

There's no framing document for this motion. My Area is

to *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon* (P-33) at the World Service Conference and that *Anonymity* (P-65) be discontinued. The Committee accepted the recommendation unanimously. Although a recommendation for discontinuance of *Anonymity* will possibly be made to the Executive Committee at a later date, recommendation for major revision of Conference Approved Literature is made to the WSC.

There was no discussion. A motion was made, seconded, and carried to give conceptual approval for a major revision of the pamphlet *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33). (See Motion #11 on page 91.)

The Associate Director of Communications—Literature shared, "You all have graciously voted in two new literature projects. We welcome your ideas, suggestions, and requests regarding the revision. As far as the sharings needed for the workbook, let people know that they can submit sharings on the blogs."

expecting us to vote on this next year.

The discussion we had on this earlier didn't address the clause "is consistent with the Legacies." This is almost as if we are justifying ourselves.

I read Motion 12 from 1994 and it does say that we can vote to end the trial. I have to check my motives and wonder why I would do this? It's my ego—that I would be on the Panel that did it.

I told people back home that we were doing this next year. Discussion would be initiated at 2010 WSC and the decision would be made at the 2011 WSC.

I was here for the Alateen discussions and I'd like to suggest that the presenters withdraw this motion. We've worked very hard to build up the trust of the membership and the WSC. If we put the motion forward and it does not pass, then it goes in the *Conference Summary* and the record will be there. We've worked very hard to build on the confidence of our fellowship and this Conference.

I agree. Every other motion that we've presented has been done in KBDM and this is occurring in a very different way. I feel we're going against what we have established.

If this motion is withdrawn, it also will appear in the *Summary* with a big X around it. I suggest we table the motion and send it to the Board of Trustees.

A motion (Motion #13) was made, seconded, and carried to table Motion 12 for further study by the Board of Trustees.

2010 WORLD SERVICE CONFERENCE (WSC) MOTIONS

MOTION #1 – CARRIED

(BY CONSENSUS)

That the following persons be seated at the 2010 World Service Conference:

With voice, but no vote:

David Zach

Director of Business Services, Non-Al-Anon Member

Peter A.

International Representative—New Zealand, Al-Anon Member

Maria Del Carmen T.

International Representative—Mexico, Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to ECRPM business, but no vote:

Linda B.

Chairman, Executive Committee for Real Property Management, Al-Anon Member

With voice limited to Cultural Competency, but no vote:

John Colon

Center for Culturally Competent Education and Training, Non-Al-Anon Member

With no voice and no vote:

Nicolette Stephens

Information Analyst, Non-Al-Anon Member

EIN.

Southeast Regional Trustee for A.A., Non-Al-Anon Member

That the following WSO staff be seated as part of their ongoing training at the 2010 World Service Conference for one day each, **with no voice and no vote:**

Julie M.

Communications Manager, Al-Anon Member

Joe T.

Archives Coordinator, Al-Anon Member

MOTION #2 – CARRIED

(92 yes, 0 no, 1 abstention, 0 void)

To approve the 2009 Audited Financial Report.

MOTION #3 – CARRIED

(92 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To approve the 2009 Annual Report.

MOTION #4 – CARRIED

(92 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

To approve the 2010 Finance Committee Report.

MOTION #5 – CARRIED

(93 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To add a new “Alateen Policy” section in the “Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies” in the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* that includes new text, current text, and amended text from pages 77 and 78 of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. The new section will be placed in between the sections titled “Membership & Group Meetings/Conventions” and “Anonymity.” (New text is underlined and bold; moved text is underlined. Strikethrough indicates deletion.)

Alateen Policy

Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements

Note: *World Service Conference Alateen policies that are approved for the World Service Conference structure must adhere to the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees. The 2003 Alateen Motion is a legal resolution of the Board of Trustees of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. and cannot be changed by a World Service Conference Motion. Just as our Al-Anon/Alateen policies and procedures must be in keeping with our Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, Twelve Concepts of Service, and the World Service Conference Charter, Alateen policies and procedures for the World Service Conference structure must also comply with the 2003 Alateen Motion. Only the Board of Trustees can amend or alter the 2003 Alateen Motion.*

Each Al-Anon Area in the World Service Conference Structure has Area Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements in place which meet or exceed the minimum requirements set by the 2003 Alateen Motion from the Board of Trustees (available from the WSO). The Area's Requirements include minimum requirements for Al-Anon Members Involved In Alateen Service (AMIAS), Alateen meetings, and Alateen participation in conferences, conventions, and other events. In order to use the Alateen name, the Area, all Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service, all Alateen members, and all meetings and events with Alateen participation must be in compliance with the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Each Area's Alateen process details the steps that must be taken to meet its requirements.

An Al-Anon Member Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) is an Al-Anon member who is currently certified through their Area's Alateen process and is therefore eligible to be directly responsible for Alateens while being of service to Alateen. AMIAS may be certified by

more than one Area; however, they must first be certified by the Area in which they reside. AMIAS may serve as Alateen Group Sponsors, chaperones, drivers, or other roles as outlined in their Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Area Alateen Coordinators are required to be certified AMIAS; the Area determines which other service roles require certification.

Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. may be certified as AMIAS and serve as a Alateen Group Sponsors by virtue of their Al-Anon membership, in accordance with their Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Emphasis should be placed on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program at all times.

Area Alateen Process

Each Area has its own process to implement and maintain its Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements, including the paperwork required for certification of AMIAS, registration of Alateen groups, and events with Alateen participation.

Details on an Area's Alateen process are available from the Area Alateen Coordinator, Area Alateen Process Person (AAPP), another Area trusted servant, or your District Representative (DR). To connect with Area trusted servants, contact your Group Representative (GR), DR, or the World Service Office.

Starting an Alateen Group

In order to use the Alateen name, groups must register with the World Service Office through their Area's Alateen process. An Al-Anon—Each meeting must have an Alateen Group Sponsor (two are recommended) is essential to every group in order to keep the focus on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program. It is recommended that there be two Every Alateen Group Sponsors each of whom is a minimum of 21 years old, currently attending Al-Anon meetings and an active Al-Anon member for at least two years in addition to any time spent in the Alateen program. (Additional requirements may be set by the Al-Anon Area.)

Once registered, every Alateen group abides by the Alateen Traditions and is open to all Alateen members.

Alateen Group Sponsors

An Alateen Group Sponsor is an adult member of Al-Anon who attends Al-Anon meetings regularly, is currently certified as an Al-Anon Member Involved

In Alateen Service through their Area's Alateen process, and has made a commitment to be of service to an Alateen meeting on a regular basis. Alateen Group Sponsors encourage the Alateens to take responsibility for their own meetings and to share their experience, strength, and hope with each other.

Alateen Group Sponsor(s) must be present to hold an Alateen meeting, as outlined in the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. When a regular Sponsor is not available, another Al-Anon member who is certified through the Area's Alateen process can serve as an Alateen Group Sponsor. When there are no certified Al-Anon members available to be of service to the Alateen group, the Alateens are welcome to attend an Al-Anon meeting. Whenever young people (minors) attend an Al-Anon meeting, the Al-Anon group would be responsible for prudent safety measures for them just as it is for the safety of Al-Anon members attending (e.g. making sure no one is left alone at the facility, etc.).

Alateen Personal Sponsors

Alateen Group Sponsors and other Al-Anon members do not serve as personal Sponsors to individual Alateens. Alateen members are encouraged to sponsor each other in a peer-to-peer relationship.

Who Attends Alateen Meetings

Alateen meetings are closed meetings; ordinarily only Alateen members, prospective members, and the Area-certified Alateen Group Sponsors affiliated with the group attend. However, designated Area trusted servants may occasionally attend the meeting as a resource to the group per the Area's Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements. Any potential Alateen Group Sponsor must go through the Area's certification process prior to visiting an Alateen group.

An Alateen group may hold an occasional (annual, bi-annual, or quarterly) public outreach open meeting for the purpose of introducing Alateen to Al-Anon members, A.A., professionals, teachers, and other members of the community.

Alateen Membership/Age Range

As the name implies, Alateen is designed for members in their teens. Family members below teen years may might not be ready for the Alateen program. Such children may have to depend on others to choose what they learn. This could lead to the development of a teaching program.

“Teaching” is not compatible with the Al-Anon principle of sharing. There are, however, younger children who can benefit from the Alateen program, which requires the ability to participate in a shared learning experience.

It is within the autonomy of each Alateen group to lower the age limit or divide into groups according to age. Whatever the decision, all such groups will be registered as “Alateen” at the World Service Office. Members in their teen years who are legally adults agree to abide by the same requirements as minor Alateens when they attend Alateen meetings and events. Alateen members in the upper teen years are encouraged to begin attending Al-Anon as well as Alateen meetings; young people beyond the teen years are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings.

Funding/Seventh Tradition

It may be difficult for a new Alateen group to meet all its expenses and needs. The local Al-Anon group(s) or district may provide literature or funds to help the group get started, with the goal of the Alateen group becoming fully self-supporting as soon as possible.

Alateen in Schools and other Facilities

Alateen meetings in schools, hospitals, juvenile centers, and other professional settings can give children and teens access to Alateen who might not otherwise be able to attend. Such meetings are often only open to the young people in those schools or facilities. Generally, members will meet with the facility staff to explain Al-Anon/Alateen principles of anonymity and confidentiality and learn about the facility’s requirements. The goal is to reach a mutually beneficial arrangement in keeping with the Area’s Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements and the Traditions. Some facilities require that a counselor or other staff member sit in the meeting; in such cases, the meeting can be considered open only to required personnel in a limited access setting. (See the guideline *Alateen Meetings in Schools* [G-5].)

Events with Alateen Participation

In order to use the Alateen name, any event or gathering with Alateen participation (including Alateen conferences, Al-Anon/Alateen conventions, Area Assemblies, multi-Area events, and A.A. events with Al-Anon and Alateen participation) must be in compliance with the Alateen Safety and Behavioral Requirements of the Area in which it is held. (See “Area Alateen Process.”)

Areas, districts, groups, or conferences may have fundraising events to provide full or partial scholarships for Alateens or Alateen Group Sponsors who may not otherwise be able to attend. In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, contributions for attending the conference should be solicited only from within Al-Anon (See “Financial Matters/Fundraising.”) (See guidelines *Alateen Conferences* [G-16], *Area Conventions* [G-20], and *Participation in Area A.A. Conventions* [G-7].)

MOTION #6 – CARRIED

(91 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

That the current Trial Regional Trustee Plan be accepted, thereby ending the trial.

MOTION #7 – CARRIED

(93 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To amend the text on pages 84-89 of the “Digest of Al-Anon/Alateen Policies” section of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, “Finances,” “Contributions to WSO-Individual,” “Quarterly Appeal,” “Direct Contributions,” “Birthday Plan,” “Memorial Contributions,” “Contributions to WSO—Groups,” “Contributions to WSO—Other,” “Al-Anon Service Contributions,” “Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions,” “Earmarking Funds,” “Reserve Fund,” “Fund Raising,” “Activities and Service,” “Outside Contributions,” “Avoiding Commercialism,” “WSO Does Not Provide Lists of Suppliers,” “Selling Products/Chances,” “Raffles/Lottery Tickets,” “Federal Statutes,” “Use of Group Funds,” “Rent and Other Group Expenses,” “Donations to Outside Agencies.” (New text is underlined and bold; moved text is underlined. Strikethrough indicates deletion.)

Financial Matters

Contributions to WSO

In keeping with our Seventh Tradition, Al-Anon is supported by members’ contributions and from the sale of our literature. All contributions are used to meet expenses for worldwide services, including a portion of the operating expense of the World Service Conference. All income from contributions and literature sales is allocated to the General Fund. Contributions to the WSO cannot be earmarked for special purposes unless recommended by the World Service Conference. Members may contribute in the following ways: (Also see “Outside Contributions.”)

Contributions to WSO =

By Individual Members

Direct Contributions

In any calendar year, an Al-Anon member may con-

tribute to the WSO **any amount** up to one percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit. (Also see "Incorporation/Taxes, Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc." regarding charitable deductions.)

Members may authorize a monthly deduction from their bank account. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Combined Giving Campaigns. Members may contribute to the WSO via a combined giving campaign. Matching funds from non-members cannot be accepted.
(Contact the WSO for details)

Birthday Plan. In honor of their Al-Anon/**Alateen birthday**, members may express their gratitude by contributing an amount for each year's membership. (see "Direct Contributions.")

Memorial Contributions. Any Al-Anon or Alateen member may make contributions to the WSO in memory of anyone who is deceased. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Quarterly Appeal. ~~The 1966 World Service Conference voted that three letters of appeal for individual contributions be sent annually from the WSO to Al-Anon members in the United States and Canada. This~~ **The quarterly appeal** gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level. ~~Since it is not possible for the WSO does not to maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon, the quarterly appeal letters are mailed to the groups' address of record. It is requested that the letters be read at two successive meetings, followed by a special collection other in addition to than the regular group collection.~~

~~The 1966 World Service Conference voted that three letters of appeal for individual contributions be sent annually from the WSO to Al-Anon/**Alateen** members in the United States and Canada. In 1998, the World Service Conference voted to increase the appeal frequency to quarterly (February, May, August, and November). Since it is not possible to maintain a list of all members of Al-Anon, the appeal letters are mailed to the groups' address of record. It is requested that the letters be read at two successive meetings followed by a special collection other than the regular group collection. This gives each member an opportunity to participate in Twelfth Step work beyond the group level. In November the appeal is extended to members of groups worldwide.~~

Bequests

The WSO may accept a *one-time* bequest from an Al-Anon member in any amount, provided its use is not

restricted by the donor. Bequest amounts, up to ten percent of the total revenue of the WSO General Fund as identified in the previous year's audit, will be placed in the General Fund. Members may give more than the ten percent; however, the portion of the bequest above ten percent will be reported separately on the financial statements. The World Service Conference will authorize the use of these excess amounts and the authorized expenditures will be administered by the Board of Trustees. These excess amounts are not available for general purposes, unless further authorized by the Conference. (Contact the WSO for details.)

Contributions to WSO—

By Groups and Other Service Entities

Al-Anon/Alateen Groups

Groups ~~usually~~ **may** make donations to the WSO on a regular basis without limit.

Contributions to WSO—Other

Al-Anon Service Arms Contributions

Districts, Al-Anon Information Services (Intergroups), Literature Distribution Centers, Areas, General Service Offices, and other Al-Anon service entities may also contribute directly to the WSO without limit.

Al-Anon and Alateen Conventions

A portion of the funds derived from Al-Anon and Alateen conventions ~~is often~~ **may be** contributed to the WSO. (See "**Conventions**," "Distribution of Proceeds.")

A.A. Conferences/Conventions

Contributions received from A.A. conferences/conventions that are offered to Al-Anon as acknowledgment of its participation in these functions may be accepted by the WSO or its service arms.

Earmarking Funds

~~All regular contributions are allocated to the General Fund. Contributions cannot be earmarked for special purposes unless recommended by the World Service Conference.~~

Reserve Fund

Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. has the right and obligation to establish and maintain a Reserve Fund. This fund, established in 1970, has a two-fold purpose: ensuring the continuation of Al-Anon's essential services and the funding of special projects. (**See Reserve Fund Guideline [G-41].**)

Discounts and Services

WSO and other Al-Anon service entities may accept discounts or services that are routinely available to other non-profit organizations (e.g. non-profit postal

rates, free placement for public service announcements, etc.). Discounts may not be accepted if the discount is given only to Al-Anon and not to other non-profit organizations.

Fund Raising

Many groups, districts, Areas, Information Services, Conventions, Conferences, Assemblies, or other gatherings of Al-Anon/Alateen members often raise funds to provide services.

Activities and Service

Fund-raising activities such as potluck suppers, dances, or other social events are conducted only within the fellowship and in agreement with the groups directly involved. If, however, such events are open to the public, use of the name Al-Anon or Alateen would violate the spirit of our Traditions.

Outside Contributions

Al-Anon and Alateen groups do not accept contributions **of money, goods, or services** from outside the Al-Anon membership in order to adhere to the Seventh Tradition of full self-support.

Avoiding Commercialism

Raffling various articles at meetings or other gatherings is a matter of autonomy (see “Selling Products/Chances”), but to avoid commercialism in the fellowship, it is suggested that these items relate in some way to our spiritual principles. Items such as Al-Anon or Alateen books, subscriptions to *The Forum*, or the donated products of the creative efforts of individual members are suggested. **(Also see “Raffle/Lottery Tickets.”)**

Program-Related Jewelry and Trinkets

The WSO does not stock or offer program-related jewelry or trinkets for sale because these actions could divert our service office from our primary purpose.

WSO Does Not Provide Lists of Suppliers

In keeping with Tradition Six, the WSO does not provide lists of suppliers for articles associated with the fellowship, i.e. **e.g.**, plaques, jewelry.

Selling Products/Chances

Selling Products at Meetings/Conventions/Conferences

Tradition Five states that the one purpose of each Al-Anon group is to help families of alcoholics. Therefore, it is inappropriate for an individual or outside entity to use Al-Anon meetings or other Al-Anon events as a marketplace before, during, or after these gatherings for the sale of services or products.

Selling Products at A.A. Meetings

In keeping with Tradition Seven, Al-Anon and Alateen members should refrain from soliciting or selling any products at A.A. meetings.

Raffles/Lottery Tickets

Raffles/lotteries are subject to **national**, state/provincial, **and local** laws.

Federal Statutes

U.S. Federal Law (Title 18, Sec. 1302 U.S.C.) and Canadian Federal Law (Sec. 189) **make it illegal to send lottery tickets through the mail.**

These Governmental regulations may prohibit solicitation of ticket money by letter or by the sales of chances on a prize. Similar restrictions may apply outside the United States and Canada.

There may also be other state or provincial laws which regulate the use of fund raising involving the sale of chances or tickets by charitable organizations. Since groups, districts, and many Areas are not registered as charities with state/provincial or federal authorities, these laws could prohibit such sales.

Local statutes **should must** also be investigated **and complied with in order to prevent individual members and Al-Anon as a whole from becoming involved in public controversy.**

After If it is determined that the proposed raffle and/or lottery falls within the legal restriction is legally permitted within of the Area where it is to be held, additional precautions need to be taken so that we are not diverted from our primary purpose and do not imply endorsement. Distribution and sale of lottery/raffle/lottery tickets should be limited to Al-Anon/Alateen meetings and events. Read “Fund Raising on page 88 of the 2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual as well as the other sections under “Selling Products/Chances” for clarification. (Also see “Fund Raising” and “Selling Products and Chances.”)

Payment for Speaking

In keeping with the Eighth Tradition, Al-Anon speakers are reimbursed for expenses only. When a member is speaking to an outside organization, the speaker may suggest funds in excess of expenses be used by the organization for the purchase of Conference Approved Literature (CAL) for distribution by the organization as an educational service.

Public Meetings

A basket may be passed at open meetings to which the public is invited. In keeping with the Seventh Tradition, it is clear that the fellowship is dependent on its own voluntary contributions. Reading the Preamble and the Traditions clarifies this principle.

Use of Group Funds

Rent and Other Group Expenses

Our Tradition of self-support suggests that the expenses for the group's operation such as rent, literature, insurance, supplies, post office box rental, Group Representative, and Information Service Representative expenses be met first. Remaining funds may be used to support local and area structures and the World Service Office.

At locations where rent may not be accepted, a supply of Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature and local meeting schedules may be provided to the facility as an appropriate alternative.

Gifts to Members

Group funds are used for group purposes only, not for personal gifts to members.

Baby-Sitters

Some meetings are attended by members who must bring children. Using group funds or taking a special collection to pay for a baby-sitter at the meetings is within a group's autonomy. Paying for this type of service does not violate Traditions, since avoiding disruption of a meeting benefits the group as a whole.

Donations to Outside Agencies

Contributions to any outside agency, activity, or program are not to be made from group funds, which In keeping with our Sixth Tradition, group funds are to be used for Al-Anon/Alateen purposes only. Groups may use their funds to purchase Al-Anon/Alateen literature to donate to outside agencies, activities, and programs for public outreach.

MOTION #8 – CARRIED

(93 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To amend the text on pages 92-95 beginning with the section "Use of Material" and ending with the section "*The Forum*" and on pages 96 and 97 the section "Reprint Authorization" in the Policy Digest section of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, as follows: (New text is underlined and bold; moved text is underlined. Strikethrough indicates deletion.)

Use of Material at Al-Anon Meetings

To keep Al-Anon's message in focus **and encourage unity**, ~~it is suggested that~~ only Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature (**CAL**) and Al-Anon/Alateen service tools ~~be~~ **are** displayed, distributed, and used at Al-Anon and Alateen meetings, including meetings at conferences, and conventions. These items reflect ~~an~~ **the** informed group conscience **of the Al-Anon Family Groups as expressed by its World Service Conference since 1961.**

While individuals may use whatever they find helpful as part of their personal recovery outside of meetings, Al-Anon does not evaluate or recommend anything other than Al-Anon materials. When sharing at meetings, members limit any mention of outside material to a brief reference.

A.A. literature is not used at Al-Anon meetings because it is written for and from the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Reliance on opinions expressed in A.A. and other outside materials can distort the Al-Anon approach.

Conference Approved Literature provides a unified view of Al-Anon/Alateen to members, professionals, other individuals, and outside agencies. Service tools produced by the World Service Office reflect the Al-Anon/Alateen service structure and the shared experiences of our membership. (**See Al-Anon Spoken Here [P-53], Why Conference Approved Literature? [P-35], and the "Three Obstacles to Success in Al-Anon," as found in Alcoholism, the Family Disease [P-4].**)

The Forum


The Forum is the monthly magazine in which Al-Anon and Alateen members share their experiences. It is "The Voice of the Fellowship," a forum where individual members and groups can be heard. The Forum staff at the WSO, with assistance from a volunteer committee, edits the letters and articles sent from all over the world. This assures a publication that a broad-based international audience can understand and use for growth in the program. It also offers meeting ideas and materials for use in group discussions.

The Forum can be used, and is encouraged to be used, by all members and groups for meetings. The Forum, as a concept, is Conference Approved, but it is not possible for each issue to follow the full procedure for Conference Approved Literature. Sharings received for The Forum are reviewed for their fidelity to the Al-Anon program and principles by a volunteer committee and/or The Forum staff. Time-sensitive articles, such as editorials, interviews, “Inside Al-Anon,” etc., may be reviewed by The Forum staff.


Since it is copyrighted material, the WSO does not grant permission for substantial reprints from The Forum in Area, district, or other service arm newsletters in the U.S. and Canada. However, it is permissible for all newsletters to reprint any articles that appear in the “Inside Al-Anon” section of The Forum. Newsletters of other countries may, upon informing the WSO, use additional Forum material if they give proper credit line in their publication. The Forum is available by subscription.

Other WSO Publications

Timely Reprints

In 1977, the World Service Conference affirmed the continuation of the use by standing committees of articles and reprints of articles from major outside publications. The use of such timely pieces does not endanger Tradition Six regarding endorsement; rather it enhances the public’s view of the Al-Anon program of recovery and helps service committees spread the message of Al-Anon’s value as a community resource. These committees may also reprint articles from The Forum, WSO newsletters, or other WSO publications when interest in a particular subject is indicated. Such reprints can be proposed for development as a permanent piece of CAL if a strong interest in them is evidenced. Because of their timeliness, reprints are often distributed between Conferences. These items are reviewed for appropriateness, use, and distribution by the service committees of origin as well as appointed members of the Policy Committee. These reprints are identified by the Al-Anon/Alateen logo  and carry the words “reprinted and distributed by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.”

Guidelines

All guidelines are a collection of shared experience and can be adapted by the membership. Guidelines can be identified by this Al-Anon/Alateen logo  and the words “compiled and distributed by Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.”

[No changes were made to *The Conference Summary*, *WSO Newsletter*, and *World Directory* sections.]

Outside Publications

~~Other Literature at Meetings.~~ There are many outside publications on alcoholism, religion, and philosophy that appeal to members as individuals. Brief excerpts from such material may be part of their personal sharing at meetings. In a spirit of unity, it is suggested that only Al-Anon and Alateen Conference Approved Literature be used and displayed at meetings.

It is well to remember that all A.A. literature is written for and from the viewpoint of alcoholics and is not Al-Anon/Alateen Conference Approved Literature. Reliance on opinions expressed in A.A. and other publications can distort the Al-Anon approach, particularly for the newcomer (see *Al-Anon Spoken Here* [P-53], *Why Conference Approved Literature?* [P-35], and *Alcoholism The Family Disease* [P-4]).

~~Reading Matter Outside of CAL.~~ Individuals may read whatever they find helpful, but Al-Anon cannot assume the responsibility for evaluating or recommending reading matter other than CAL (see the leaflet *Why Conference Approved Literature?* [P-35]).

~~Publications by Information Services (Intergroups), Local Service Centers.~~ Traditions are violated when a group, Information Service (Intergroup), or any other service arm publishes its own literature (see the only exception, “Public Information Literature”). It is also ignoring Traditions to promote the sale of outside literature.

Reprint Authorization to Publish and Reprint

Publishing

The World Service Conference has authorized Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., also known as WSO, to be the sole publishing agency for the fellowship worldwide. Therefore, no Al-Anon group, Information Service (Intergroup), Literature Distribution Center, or any other service arm may produce or publish its own literature or sell outside literature and/or materials. (The only exception is found under “Public Information Literature” in the “Public Relations” section.)

Requests to Reprint

The World Service Conference has authorized Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc., also known as WSO, to be the publishing agency for the fellowship worldwide. Permission to reprint extensively from our publications is not granted in the United States and Canada to any individuals, within or outside of our membership, or to any outside agency. Forms to request reprint permission

are available from the WSO. Each request received at the WSO to reprint limited excerpts will be evaluated on its merits and the circumstances. Requests for permission to reprint limited excerpts from copyrighted Al-Anon/Alateen material must include at least four paragraphs from the proposed new text. The new text should include the two paragraphs of the author's/writer's/editor's material immediately prior to the excerpt and the two paragraphs of the author's/writer's/editor's material immediately following the excerpt. When reprint permission is granted by the WSO the appropriate credit line must accompany the excerpt. Two copies of the published material/document must be sent to the WSO on or before publication. The WSO terminates permission to reprint if the volume is not published within two years from the date of the request.

Countries Outside United States and Canada

Permission to publish CAL is extended only to national Al-Anon General Service bodies in countries outside the United States and Canada. Occasionally such permission is extended to Al-Anon Central Service Committees, Centers, or even a single group, with the provision that the right to publish be relinquished when a general service body is formed.

Granting Permission to Translate CAL

All translations of Al-Anon CAL to other languages are to be submitted to the WSO for review and approval before permission to print or reprint is granted.

Service Tools/Material and Electronic Publishing

A listing of Al-Anon/Alateen service tools/materials that may be posted on Web sites is found on the WSO Web site: www.Al-Anon.alateen.org. A credit line "Reprinted by permission of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc." is required. No other Al-Anon/Alateen copyrighted literature may be reprinted electronically without express written permission from the WSO.

MOTION #9 – CARRIED

(90 yes, 2 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

That the 2010 WSC give conceptual approval to develop a Legacies workbook, using sharings from the Legacy blogs.

MOTION #10 – CARRIED

(92 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions, 0 void)

To amend text on pages 77-79 of the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*, "Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions," "Membership and Groups," "Membership Eligibility," "Registration of Groups," and "Choosing a Group's Name." (New text is underlined and bold; moved text is underlined. Strikethrough indicates deletion.)

Membership and Group Meetings/Conventions

Membership and Groups

Membership Eligibility

Anyone who feels his personal life is or has been deeply affected by close contact with a problem drinker is eligible for membership in Al-Anon/**Alateen**. (See "Families with Related Problems.")

As the name implies, Alateen is designed for members in their teens. Alateens are members of the Al-Anon fellowship. Where there is no Alateen meeting available, young people are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings. (**See "Alateen Policy" section.**) ~~As the name implies, Alateen is designed for members in their teens. Family members below teen years may not be ready for the Alateen program. Such children may have to depend on others to choose what they learn. This could lead to the development of a teaching program. "Teaching" is not compatible with the Al-Anon principle of sharing. There are, however, younger children who can benefit from the Alateen program, which requires the ability to participate in a shared learning experience.~~

~~It is within the autonomy of each Alateen group to lower the age limit or divide into groups according to age. Whatever the decision, all such groups will be registered as "Alateen" at the World Service Office. Members beyond the teen years are encouraged to attend Al-Anon meetings.~~

Who Can Start a Group

The actual founding of the group and its functions is the responsibility of those qualified for membership. Occasionally a minister, doctor, social worker, or A.A. member initiates the formation of an Al-Anon/Alateen group. However, after the group has started, professional or A.A. participation should be limited to open meetings.

Registration of Groups

The WSO will register any group designating itself as an Al-Anon Family Group with the understanding that it will abide by the Traditions and that meetings will be open to any Al-Anon member. ~~Alateen meetings, however, consist~~

~~of younger family members assisted by an Al-Anon Sponsor. (See “Alateen Policy” section for information on registering an Alateen group.)~~

The WSO cannot register any group that is solely for Al-Anon members who are also recovering alcoholics and members of A.A., because it does not qualify to have a Group Representative.

There are Al-Anon or Alateen groups where meeting access is limited due to the facility’s entry restrictions. These groups meet at sites such as military bases, industrial plants, or schools.

~~**Alateen Groups.** An Al-Anon Sponsor is essential to every group in order to keep the focus on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program. It is recommended that there be two Alateen Sponsors each of whom is a minimum of 21 years old, currently attending Al-Anon meetings and an active Al-Anon member for at least two years in addition to any time spent in the Alateen program. Al-Anon members who are also members of A.A. may serve as a Sponsor by virtue of their Al-Anon membership. Emphasis should be placed on the Al-Anon interpretation of the program at all times.~~

Choosing a Group’s Name

~~A name that includes the town or section of the town, the meeting day, or a phrase from our program would be inviting to all. **Having an appropriate group name is very important because it is included in local and on-line meeting directories and may be a potential member’s first impression of Al-Anon. The group’s name should be inviting to all and reflect Al-Anon principles.**~~ A group’s name should not imply affiliation with any other Twelve Step group, self-help group, commercial venture, agency, religious group, rehabilitation facility, or other outside enterprise even if the name is associated with its location—e.g., the ____ Church AFG or the ____ Hospital AFG.

To help avoid confusion with other entities it is suggested that groups spell out their full name and include ~~Al-Anon~~ and Alateen: **the letters AFG for Al-Anon Family Group.**

The WSO will review proposed group names for adherence to Al-Anon principles. (See “Group Names” in “Groups at Work.”)

Assembly Representation

Each Al-Anon /Alateen group elects a Group Representative (GR). (See “World Service Handbook.”) Assembly ~~Areas~~ should encourage the attendance of Alateen GRs at district and Assembly meetings.

Multiple Group Membership and Office-Holding

Al-Anon members who attend several groups *regularly* and *participate fully* in all of them may consider themselves members of all those groups. Most members, however, consider one group their home group.

MOTION #11 – CARRIED

(92 yes, 0 no, 0 abstentions, 1 void)

That the 2010 WSC give conceptual approval for a major revision of the pamphlet *Why Anonymity in Al-Anon?* (P-33).

MOTION #12 – TABLED

To affirm that ownership of property is consistent with the Al-Anon/Alateen Legacies; to end the property ownership trial and retain the WSO headquarters property; and to ask the Board of Trustees to draft a motion for the 2011 World Service Conference that incorporates the spiritual intent and safeguards of 1994 WSC Motion 12.

MOTION #13 – CARRIED

(88 yes, 2 no, 1 abstentions, 1 void)

To table the 2010 WSC Motion 12 for further study by the Board of Trustees.

2009 ANNUAL OPERATIONAL REPORT

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

ADMINISTRATION

OVERALL ADMINISTRATION

Ric B., Executive Director

The **Board of Trustees** of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. (AFG, Inc.) meets quarterly and is responsible for carrying out the mandates of the World Service Conference (WSC), establishing business policies of the World Service Office (WSO), estimating revenue, administering service to the membership, publishing and distributing Conference Approved Literature (CAL), and approving the quarterly and annual reports submitted by the Executive Director and WSO staff.

The Executive Committee meets monthly and is empowered to act on behalf of the Trustees between Board meetings. It has legal authority bestowed by the Board of Trustees to have oversight of day-to-day affairs of the WSO.

AFG, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization, listed under Section 501 (c) (3) of the United States (U.S.) Internal Revenue Code, and has been incorporated in New York State since 1954. Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters (Canada) Inc. has been incorporated since February 1999 as a registered charity under paragraph 149 (1) of the Income Tax Act of Canada.

The Executive Director is responsible for overall supervision of the WSO staff (currently 50 full-time employees) and for administration of the organization's policies. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Communication Services, or the Executive Director's designee acts in his stead. The Director of Business Services is directly responsible for business operations and controlling finances.

AFG, Inc. is committed to equal employment opportunity and is in compliance with applicable federal, state, and local fair employment laws and guidelines. AFG, Inc. does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, age, religion, national origin, or disability status. Every effort is made to maintain a work atmosphere that is free from harassment.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Mary Ann R., Chairperson

The Trustees, along with members of the Executive Committee, direct business operations of the World Service Office, observing the By-Laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc. The Board acts as the chief service arm of the World Service Conference. They guard the legal rights of the Al-Anon fellowship and control the finances. The Board serves as guardian of our Twelve Traditions, our Twelve Concepts of Service, and the Conference Charter.

The Board approved Interim Actions of the Executive Committee:

- To approve WSO at-large Committee members for all Committees.

- To approve conference calls with Coordinators of WSO Committees.
- To create a Thought Force of Al-Anon members who could propose ideas to increase *Forum* readership and subscriptions.
- To approve travel to the 2009 European Zonal meeting in Essen, Germany with side trips to Hungary and Turkey for two people.
- To approve travel for the Executive Director and two other persons to the Ibero-American Conference (Zonal Meeting) in Argentina.
- To approve the Alateen Chat Guidelines.
- To form a Thought Force comprised of members from Beginners' Meetings to identify current formats of Beginners' Meetings and the benefits received by their supporting Al-Anon groups.
- To approve the Whistleblower Policy for the WSO.
- To approve the Alateen Training Module IV.
- To approve the mailing of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism 2010* to District Representatives and Spanish-speaking and French-speaking groups.
- To produce and distribute a table card, suitable for Alateen groups to distribute at Al-Anon groups in their vicinity, encouraging Al-Anon members to bring their children to Alateen.
- To form a Thought Force, comprised of members selected from the talents survey database, to identify how the group inventory guideline can help the group.
- Staff Travel
 - To attend a meeting with the Hazelden Treatment Centers' family and parent program coordinators and primary care staff in Plymouth and Center City, MN.
 - To attend the "Women's Health" Conference in Washington, D.C.
 - To attend the annual Scientific Conference—Research Society on Alcoholism.
 - To visit Canadian national alcohol and health related organizations in Ottawa and Toronto.

The Board, in its legal capacity, took the following actions:

- At the Annual Meeting:
 - To approve the Auditor's Report as presented.
 - To elect five Trustee at Large (TAL) nominees and three Regional Trustee (RT) nominees, as well as Board Officers, Executive Committee at-Large members, and the Chairpersons of the Executive Committee and Executive Committee for Real Property (ECRPM), following traditional approval by the Conference where required.
 - To approve the selection of Committee Chairs, submitted by the Chairperson of the Board.
- Elected one Trustee for a one-year special appointment to fill a vacant position as Southeast Regional Trustee.
- Set the equalized expense for the 2010 WSC at \$1,250 U.S.

The full cost for a Delegate to attend the WSC is \$1,834 U.S.

- Set the equalized expense for the 2010 IAGSM to be held in Virginia Beach, VA at \$1,256 U.S. The full cost for a Delegate to attend the IAGSM is \$1,675 U.S.
- Inquired of the Delegates to determine the kind of information they need to have for a successful discussion at the 2010 WSC regarding the ending of the RT Trial Plan. The questions and answers were compiled for distribution.
- Approved Ecuador as a trial General Service Office, as they have met the necessary criteria.
- Approved the sending of activities and proposals from Thought Forces, Task Forces, and Work Groups to the Executive Committee on an on-going basis.
- Voted to invite candidates for RT to meet with the Board over an informal dinner in January 2010, using a process similar to that used for TAL candidates.
- Voted that the Finance Committee assume the responsibility of the Investment Committee, and that the Investment Committee be dissolved for a three-year trial period.
- Voted to adopt the amended Investment Guidelines.
- Created Task Forces to develop and compile a Board Handbook and a Board self-evaluation tool.

The Board, in its oversight capacity, approved the following:

- Approved the 2010 World Service Conference theme “Celebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—50 years of the World Service Conference.”
- Inquired of the Delegates to determine the kind of information they need to have a successful discussion at the 2010 WSC regarding the ending of the property ownership trial. The information was compiled and distributed.
- Voted to allow a non-Conference member to lead a presentation on diversity at the 2010 WSC in order to bring a fresh perspective on the topic.
- Developed and approved a Board Profile to help in the selection process of Trustee candidates.
- Reviewed and approved changes to the Strategic Plan.
- Received and reviewed reports from all Committees, Work Groups, and Thought and Task Forces of the Board.
- As a result of discussions from members of the 2009 WSC, new ideas surfaced and suggestions were made for future Thought and Task Forces. The Board continued the discussion and generated topics for the 2010 WSC Thought and Task Forces.
- Held a Service Day (during the October Board week) to discuss the subject of “Operational Planning.”
- Voted to amend the text on pages 92-95, beginning with the section “Use of Material” and ending with the section “*The Forum*,” and on pages 96 and 97 the section “Reprint Authorization” in the “Policy Digest” section of the 2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies.

STRATEGIC PLAN REPORT

Everyone, Everywhere

All people, all over the globe will recognize the AFG name, what we do, how to contact us, where and when to find a meeting. In this way, the Al-Anon program of recovery will be available to all who have been affected by someone else’s drinking.

Priority:

Goal #1: To increase Al-Anon membership worldwide.

Objective #1: To increase group participation of young adults between the ages of 25 and 40 within the WSC structure by 1%.

Progress: On-line survey of non-members was conducted and results are currently being reviewed by the Work Group.

Additional progress:

Goal #3: During all planning and business meetings, the Board of Trustees will have a priority focus of spending 80% of time in forward-thinking strategic work and 20% of time in evaluation. Evaluations will include a quarterly review of the WSO’s activities and the Board’s self-review.

Objective #1: By October 2007, the Board will have adopted and successfully used a tool which will be an accurate evaluation of its work, will assist in improving its work, and also assist in the oversight of the WSO’s work.

Progress: A Task Force has provided a trial self-evaluation set of questions and a trial procedure for implementation of a regular self-evaluation of the Board.

Universal Understanding of Recovery

The meaning of recovery will be understood by everyone – within and outside of Al-Anon Family Groups, including professionals, governmental agencies, and the general public. The definition of recovery will be clear and concise, including how membership in Al-Anon leads to recovery.

Priority:

Goal #3: Everyone—both within Al-Anon and outside—will have the same universal understanding of family recovery.

Objective #1: By April 2011, develop a clear and concise definition of family recovery.

Progress: An on-line survey of members was conducted and results are currently being reviewed by the Work Group. The Work Group will be using input to create a follow-up survey that will begin to narrow the definition.

Additional progress:

Goal #1: To acquire research that validates the importance of family recovery.

Objective #1: Obtain existing research that deals with the effects of alcoholism on families, by locating two resources within one year.

Progress: By utilizing staff whose expertise is in research, we have been able to tap into available resources.

(Goal #1) Objective #2: By December 2009, create a list of at least 10 relevant research articles on family recovery, and make the list available in the professional section of the Al-Anon Public Outreach Web site.

Progress: Have discovered 12 articles by professionals, directly relating to family recovery. The Work Group is reviewing articles to determine the criteria necessary to evaluate whether an article could be posted on the Public Outreach Web site.

Goal #4: (Moved from Support and Strengthen our Structure) The Board of Trustees, the Executive Committee, and the World Service Office Staff will be catalysts to bring together potential partners who can make a difference in the lives of those affected by someone else's drinking.

Objective #1: To invite one non-member professional partner annually to meet with the Board of Trustees.

Progress: The Board of Trustees met with a former member of A.A. Board of Trustees, who is also very active in national family services. This practice will be moved from the Strategic Plan to an operations plan, making this activity a regular occurrence for the Board of Trustees.

Unlimited Abundant Resources

Tapping into the vast resources within and outside the fellowship, we have the ability to reach everyone in need of Al-Anon Family Groups, regardless of cost, experience, situation, location, etc.

Priority:

Goal #1: Discover and use universal resources.

Objective #1: Create a database of membership resources by January 2010, for the purpose of moving the Strategic Plan forward.

Progress: Member questionnaire developed and made available to the membership via Web site. Data is being collected and entered into a database for use by the Board of Trustees.

A new Goal #3, and Objective #1 have been added:

Goal #3: Develop a program to illustrate to the groups how their contributions for services they received from the World Service Office make them self-supporting.

Objective #1: Educate our membership on what self-supporting means.

Support and Strengthen our Structure

Improving communication among all service structures and educating members regarding the principles and the Legacies of the program will make Al-Anon Family Groups' foundation firm.

Priority:

Goal #2 (Now Goal #4): To have a full Board of highly competent members.

Objective #1: Develop a process by August 15, 2011 to attract competent, able members to fulfill current needs of the Board.

Progress: A list of skills, experience and time commitments needed by a Trustee has been developed. This list will be used as one tool for recruiting new Board members.

Additional progress:

Goal # 1: The Board and Staff will be catalysts to strengthen the groups and to expand our mutual relationship.

Objective #2: Use existing forms of communication to support the Group Representatives in fulfilling their responsibilities by April 2010.

Progress: A letter was published in *The Forum* which stimulated responses to help Group Representatives. Letters and some responses were published in *The Forum* and are also available on the Members' Web site.

Goal #4: To have a full Board of highly competent members.

Objective # 2: Create an innovative Regional Service Seminar by 2008.

Progress: TEAM is a reality with our first scheduled event in May 2010. The TEAM process was launched at the 2009 World Service Conference. Materials were posted on the Members' Web site.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Judy P., Chairperson

The Executive Committee meets monthly and is the administrator of the World Service Office, with legal authority granted by the Board of Trustees to conduct the WSO's daily affairs. It approves actions of the Finance Committee and special projects of the Board and staff that involve day-to-day operations. Its actions are submitted quarterly to the Board of Trustees for final approval. These activities are reported in the Board of Trustees section.

The Executive Committee approved the following actions which will be presented to the January Board for final approval:

- Approval of résumés for a Thought Force that will brainstorm ideas to make *The Forum* appealing to more members of the fellowship.
- The review and approval of a new Record Retention Policy for the World Service Office. This is to satisfy the new question on the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 990

Forms, which are required to be completed by all 501 (c) (3), not-for-profit corporations.

- Staff travel was approved to meet the new Administrator of SAMHSA and to attend “Counseling and Treating People of Colour—An International Conference.”
- Approved a special mailing of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* (AFA) to District Representatives and Spanish-speaking and French-speaking groups. The desired outcome of this special mailing is to re-engage the groups in using the magazine for their outreach projects.

On-going work of the Executive Committee:

- Reviews all presentations and handouts for the World Service Conference.
- Tracks and evaluates Work Group and Task Force work for Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives.
- Receives monthly reports from the Executive Director for Administration, and the Directors of Business Services, Communication Services, and Member Services.
- Reviews and updates policies and procedures regarding the WSO Archives.
- Reviews policies and procedures for the World Service Office Personnel Manual.

ADMINISTRATION

The “Using the Traditions in Our Personal Lives” blog on the Members’ Web site was active in 2009. This follows the aim of “Using the Concepts in Our Personal Lives” blog from 2008, in a continued effort to allow members to apply Legacies, customarily explored in the context of the service structure, to their individual lives. One Tradition was featured each month, with an introductory sharing from a WSO volunteer or staff member. Each month, a link to the corresponding chapter on the featured Tradition from *Paths to Recovery—Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions, and Concepts* (B-24) was available in all three languages. Members were able to comment on the featured Tradition, sharing in English, Spanish, and French. In total, 126 comments were posted for the English blog, 36 in Spanish, and 66 in French. An average of 438 visitors per day viewed the blog, in all three languages.

For 2010, the “Using Al-Anon’s Steps in Our Personal Lives” blog will be unveiled on the Public Outreach and Members’ Web sites in English, Spanish, and French. No introductory sharing will be posted, but a Step podcast will be available as an additional feature. Members will be able to share their recovery with each other as well as with potential newcomers and professionals wanting to know more about the program. Also, the Concepts and Traditions Blogs on the Members’ Web site will be opened for members to post comments.

A *Service Manual* Task Force composed of staff members was appointed to standardize the style for the next printing of the *Service Manual*.

The WSO’s on-line tool used to communicate with service members, e-Communities, will be expanded to include LDCs

and GSOs. IAGSM Delegates and AIS Communities are in the final stages of implementation.

Upon resignation of two employees, staffing has been reorganized to eliminate those two positions: Communications Secretary and Accounting Circulation Secretary.

A Task Force was appointed to revise and update the Membership Survey. For the first time, member participation was completely on-line.

The “Unlimited Abundant Resources” Member Skills Survey was launched at the 2009 World Service Conference. It was later revised in order to more feasibly integrate the data into the current member database.

Plans have been approved to offer the template of *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism* in English, Spanish, or French to all General Service Offices outside the WSC structure, in order to increase public awareness, lower their costs of purchase, and reduce the WSO’s costs of shipping.

ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

The Administrative Team is composed of the Director of Business Services, the Director of Communication Services, the Director of Member Services, and the WSO Controller. The Administrative Team was created to have oversight of certain office-wide projects assigned by the Executive Director, as well as to provide leadership support to the office in the absence of the Executive Director. The Director serving on the Executive Committee, currently the Director of Communication Services has full authority to act on behalf of the Executive Director in his absence due to traveling or illness.

During 2009, the Administrative Team researched data vaulting and determined that this approach may be a better procedure for disaster recovery than leasing an off-site facility. The WSO’s databases and applications could be accessed through the Internet from any off-site location, e.g. a hotel. The WSO engaged a technology consulting firm—Eastern Data, Inc.—to evaluate our processes and to provide assistance to the WSO in fine-tuning the Disaster Recovery Plan.

The Administrative Team developed a Records Retention Policy; it was approved by the Executive Committee in November 2009. This policy will be implemented in 2010.

The guidelines and procedures for the Literature Shelf Life have been approved and will be implemented in 2010.

The Administrative Team began working on the Operational Plan in September. Five operating plans for five office-wide processes have been developed. The Administrative Team will continue to develop the Operational Plan through 2010.

The Administrative Team recommended some changes to the *Employee Policy and Procedures Manual*. These changes have been approved by the Executive Committee. The Administrative Team will continue to review the *Employee Policy and Procedures Manual* for consistent terminology and practice.

The Administrative Team members began updating the *Administrative Manual*. The suggested changes will be submitted to the Executive Director for his input and approval.

COMMUNICATION SERVICES

PUBLIC OUTREACH

Brand awareness. The general public's awareness and understanding of the Al-Anon Family Group name has increased substantially in the past five years, according to recent research.

The number of non-members in the U.S. and Canada who said they have heard of Al-Anon Family Groups has increased by 9 percentage points, from 36 percent in 2004 to 45 percent in 2009. In addition to simple awareness, the number of non-members in the U.S. and Canada who correctly understood Al-Anon's purpose increased by 8 percentage points, from 70 percent in 2004 to 78 percent in 2009. It is significant to have made that much progress in five years.

The research indicated that Public Service Announcements (PSAs) broadcast on television had a significant role in delivering an Al-Anon message to the general public. The number of people who said they first heard of Al-Anon Family Groups as a result of "television advertising" increased 8 percentage points, from 21 percent in 2004 to 29 percent in 2009. PSAs are advertisements that the television stations broadcast at no charge, as a public service.

TV PSA Campaign. For the second consecutive year, Nielsen Media Research has ranked Al-Anon PSAs broadcast in the U.S. in the top 10 percent of campaigns that generate the most airplays in the U.S. and Canada. Our Canadian PSA broadcasts are ranked separately in this tally, but on their own, they often rank in the top 20 percent of all PSAs broadcast in the U.S. and Canada.

"Sketches II" (launched in October 2008) generated more airplay than any of our previous 12-month PSA campaigns. It slightly exceeded the success of "Sketches I" (introduced in July 2007), previously our most-broadcast PSA campaign. "Sketches II" generated 38,969 broadcasts in 12 months, an average of about 3,250 per month. Prior to the two Sketches campaigns, our largest PSA campaign, "Suffocating" (2001-2002), generated about 2,600 broadcasts per month.

In 2009, there were months when the two Sketches campaigns were running simultaneously. Between Sketches I and II, we averaged a total of about 3,400 broadcasts per month in 2009. Sketches III was introduced in October 2009. The growth of our PSA campaigns is evident in this summary of total Al-Anon airplays per calendar year:

2006	22,746
2007	30,765
2008	40,767
2009	44,374

Radio PSA Campaign. Our radio PSA campaign (introduced in October 2008) ran throughout 2009, but, due to cost considerations, we measured the results for only eight months. In eight months, our radio PSAs were broadcast more than 31,183 times in the U.S. and Canada, Puerto Rico, and Bermuda. These broadcasts attracted a total listening audience of about 109

million people—about 65.5 million English-speaking Americans, 3.5 million English-speaking Canadians, and 3.6 million French-speaking Canadians. Proportional to market size, we had our greatest success in the Spanish-language market in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Our Spanish-language PSAs generated a total listening audience of 36.2 million in a market of about 40 million people.

Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism. In 2009, members distributed 266,700 copies of our public outreach magazine, *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, in their local communities. It was our biggest year ever for *Al-Anon Faces Alcoholism*, although the growth over last year was only 2 percent. The magazine is supplied to members at cost. Members have distributed almost 937,000 copies since 2006.

Strategic media relationships. We have developed a productive working relationship with the ABC television network, which consulted with us in preparing Al-Anon "placements" in two of its television shows. Al-Anon was mentioned prominently and recommended on episodes of *SuperNanny* (broadcast twice) and *General Hospital*. ABC's news division has contacted us for comment on some of their news stories.

"Dear Abby" mentioned Al-Anon prominently in two columns this year; she participated in one of our Podcasts, in which she strongly recommended Al-Anon.

We worked closely on script revisions with Hallmark Hall of Fame, which is preparing a docudrama about the life of Al-Anon co-founder, Lois W. for broadcast in 2010. While we do not endorse or affiliate with outside organizations, we wanted to ensure the accuracy of certain facts, including the exact wording in Al-Anon's Twelve Steps. We believe the broadcast will give visibility to Al-Anon Family Groups and the importance of family recovery.

Public Outreach Web site. Our English-language Public Outreach Web site attracted about 802,000 visits, an increase of about 9.5 percent, compared to 2008. Visits to the French-language Web site increased almost 5 percent to 18,000. Visits to the Spanish-language Web site increased 4.7 percent to 38,000.

Podcasts. In our second year of Podcasting, we introduced nine new offerings, including some interviews with professionals. In total, our Podcasts were downloaded more than 57,500 times in 2009. More than 4,307 Podcast listeners went directly to our "find a meeting" page on the Public Outreach Web site after listening to a Podcast.

Google PSA. In calendar year 2009, our Google PSA campaign generated 455,187 impressions (down 14 percent from last year) and 20,052 click-throughs to our Public Outreach Web site (down 29 percent), for a click-through rate of 4.41 percent, which is down from last year's 5.37 percent. It is not clear why the Google PSAs generated a weaker response in 2009.

Other outreach activities. We have completed more than 30 hours of video taping to record professional endorsements, member testimonials, and other materials for future use on our Public Outreach Web site and other public outreach projects. We interviewed a diverse group of 17 Al-Anon members, 13 Alateen members, and eight professionals. The video material is undergoing final editing and will be available for distribution in 2010.

Staff prepared four press releases in 2009. These releases were available on our Public Outreach Web site, and were distributed by members to newspapers in their local communities.

Staff conducted four telephone conference calls with Public Outreach Coordinators, the latter two of which were offered twice to accommodate the schedules of the Coordinators. We were surprised that the additional opportunities did not increase participation.

Relationships with professionals. We published three editions of *e-News for Professionals*. Our mailing list to professionals has grown to 660, nearly triple what it was last year. There were more than 10,000 visitors to our *e-News for Professionals* Web page.

We maintained our working relationship with the U.S. Federal Government's Recovery Month program, an umbrella program that unites a range of recovery organizations. As a result of these relationships, staff was invited to serve as a panelist at two conferences hosted by the Entertainment Industries Council (EIC) and the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). We also maintained our relationships with the top administrators at SAMHSA, the federal government's agency for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services.

We reached out to build new relationships with professionals in Canada. In Ottawa, staff met with officials at Health Canada, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA); in Toronto, with three divisions of the Centre for Addiction Mental Health (CAMH), the Renaissance Treatment Centre, and the College of Family Physicians.

Staff cooperated with a Native American substance abuse organization, White Bison, Inc.'s "Journey of Forgiveness." We worked with Area Public Outreach Coordinators to have Al-Anon information tables at 17 of White Bison's 22 recovery events in 2009.

PUBLIC OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Vicki H./Harriet T., Chairperson

Pat Q., Staff Liaison, Associate Director of Communications—Media

The Committee, consisting of eleven Delegate members, up to five At-Large members, the WSO Staff Liaison, and the WSO Volunteer Chairperson, met via quarterly conference calls. Committee members also conducted audio/visual reviews of Public Outreach materials via the Internet.

During 2009, the Public Outreach Committee recommended that the WSO direct its media outreach efforts to attract a more diverse membership to Al-Anon. They recommended that, as a fellowship, we move to build stronger relationships with profes-

sionals who might refer more friends and families of alcoholics to Al-Anon Family Groups.

The Committee recommended that we update *The Best of Public Outreach* (P-90) to an electronic format so as to provide a quick source of accurate "how-to-do-it" information for Public Outreach Coordinators and the fellowship.

FELLOWSHIP COMMUNICATIONS

The Forum. The major event in Fellowship Communications in 2009 has been the resurgence in subscriptions to *The Forum*. Subscriptions had been trending downward for many years, reaching a low-point of 19,097 in June 2009. By December, steady gains every month had increased that total by 15 percent to 22,017, a level not seen since November 2007.

The problem of declining subscriptions was raised at the 2009 World Service Conference. The turnaround began after Delegates took their concern for the future of *The Forum* back to their Area Assemblies, Area World Service Committees, and the *Forum* Coordinators. A July article in *The Forum* brought this problem to the membership at large. Staff conducted two conference calls with *Forum* Coordinators, who have given presentations on *The Forum* in their Areas. Staff has also provided *Forum* Coordinators with monthly and quarterly updates on our progress. *Area Highlights* has published ideas for increasing *Forum* subscriptions.

While the rise in subscriptions has been encouraging, our primary challenge is to enrich the quality of our shared recovery and increase more members' engagement with Al-Anon beyond the group level. For that, *The Forum* needs more readers, more visibility at meetings, and more members who send their sharings to the magazine. Increasing the number of subscriptions is a means to these goals, not our singular focus.

TRACING OUR GROWTH. A Task Force appointed by the Board Chair developed an approach and an outline for writing a book of history and recovery encompassing the events and issues of Al-Anon's first 60 years. This book-in-progress, approved by the 2008 World Service Conference, is scheduled for publication in 2011, Al-Anon's 60th anniversary year. It has the working title of TRACING OUR GROWTH.

Support for CAL. Staff met twice in conference calls with Area Literature Coordinators to give the Coordinators an opportunity to share ideas with each other for encouraging the membership to learn more about CAL. Twenty-seven out of 68 Coordinators participated in the March call; 21 participated in the September call.

The Sample Chapter literature project, begun in 2007, was completed. Each quarter, the Literature Coordinators asked members to select quotations from an Al-Anon book featured on our Web sites and then submit meeting topics and discussion questions. Between 20 and 40 submissions were received each quarter for possible inclusion on the Members' Web site and publication in "CAL Corner," a monthly feature on Al-Anon literature in *The Forum*.

Prior to the most recent printings, staff completed a thorough proofreading of *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* (B-6, B-14) and *Paths to Recovery* (B-24). The corrections of minor grammatical mistakes in *One Day at a Time in Al-Anon* were approved by the Executive Committee, per a motion of the 2000 World Service Conference.

FORUM EDITORIAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (FEAC)

Blondel R., Chairperson; Karen R./Sharon H., Board Liaison
Robert S., Staff Liaison, Director of Communication Services

The Committee consists of five volunteers, including a volunteer chairperson. FEAC met three times via telephone conference call. In 2009, the Executive Committee voted to approve two recommendations proposed by FEAC:

First, to revise *The Forum's* statement of purpose so as to more strongly align the magazine with Al-Anon's primary purpose, as well as to note the magazine's role as a source of news at the world service level.

Second, to revise for the sake of clarity the magazine's statement about anonymity and photographs. The new statement reads: "In keeping with Traditions Eleven and Twelve, *The Forum* respects the anonymity of all Al-Anon and Alateen members. When any full-face image is published in this magazine, the person in that image is not an Al-Anon or Alateen member."

Both statements were first published in the May 2009 issue. Also, FEAC has prepared a readership survey for distribution in 2010. The last reader preference survey was done in 2005.

LITERATURE COMMITTEE

Penny R./Sandie D., Chairperson
Tom C., Staff Liaison,
Associate Director of Communications—Literature

The Committee, consisting of six Delegate members, five At-Large members, the WSO Staff Liaison, and the WSO Volunteer Chairperson, met quarterly via conference calls.

The Committee reviewed several suggestions for new literature or revisions to existing literature, including a request from the Italian Al-Anon Service Conference to revise the Suggested Al-Anon Preamble to the Twelve Steps to give more visibility to Alateen. The Committee decided against that proposal.

The Committee recommended minor changes to the "Who Are Alcoholics?" section of *Understanding Ourselves and Alcoholism* (P-48), which is also included in *Alateen—Hope for Children of Alcoholics* (B-3) and the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* (P-24/27). Also, the Committee brainstormed ideas to encourage expanded use of CAL among members. Many of these ideas have since been given to Area Literature Coordinators.

MEMBER SERVICES

GROUP SERVICES COMMITTEE

Laurie K., Chairperson, Trustee
Doris W./J.P. M. Chairpersons, Alateen Advisory Committee, Trustees
Barbara O., Director of Member Services
Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Group Services—
Alateen and Special Services

The Group Services Committee continued its discussion on how the work of the Committee can best be accomplished. During the face-to-face meeting prior to the World Service Conference, the Committee unanimously decided to submit a motion to the Board that the Group Services Committee would disband, on a three-year trial basis. Details of the Group Services Committee discussions and Conference Motion #9 can be found in the *2009 World Service Conference Summary*.

A Beginners' Meeting Thought Force has been formed to identify how Beginners' Meetings meet the needs of newcomers and how those meetings are supported by Al-Anon groups that meet at the same time and location. Members from six Areas in

the U.S. and Canada are serving on this Thought Force.

In the second year of a three-year trial, Alateen Advisory Committee (AAC) meetings were held in conjunction with Area Assemblies in Georgia, Ohio, and Ontario South. Seven Areas in three Regions (U.S. Southeast, U.S. North Central, and Canada Central) submitted bids to host in 2009. The three meetings, each with different members from the host Area, followed the same agenda, discussing how Alateen groups and individual members can help Alateen to grow. Means of outreach to Al-Anon and A.A. groups, as well as schools and other public venues, were addressed. Safety on the Internet was another topic, as well as using the *Taking Group Inventory* guideline (G-8) for an Alateen group inventory. Nine Alateens and eight Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) participated. All discussions were lively and productive, and the Assemblies most welcoming.

The bidding regions for 2010 Alateen Advisory Committee meetings are US Northwest, US South Central, and Canada East.

ADMISSIONS/ HANDBOOK WORK GROUP

Bev A., Chairperson

Suzanne M., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference

The Work Group submitted the following for the 2009 World Service Conference Big Question regarding division/consolidation of Areas, which the Board of Trustees approved: “Is the current World Service Conference model providing the spiritual bridge we need to expand into the future in order to meet the needs of the fellowship?”

As part of reviewing the tasks of the Admissions/Handbook Work Group, the Delegate members of the Work Group were polled and all agreed to ask the Conference Leadership Team (CLT) to perform the task of submitting the Seating Motion. Following its approval, the CLT submitted the Seating Motion to the Board of Trustees for approval. The Seating Motion was then voted on by all Conference members. This change was made on a three-year trial basis.

Because one of the main functions of the Admissions/Handbook Work Group was to approve the Seating Motion, the members of Admissions/Handbook discussed the need to continue as a Work Group. Following a brainstorming session to discuss new ways to accomplish the work, the Work Group agreed that the duties of Admissions/Handbook could be performed by short-term Task Forces and by its parent Committee, the Conference Leadership Team.

The 2009 Conference voted to dissolve the Admissions/Handbook Work Group on a three-year trial basis.

CONFERENCE LEADERSHIP TEAM

Doreen D./Carol V., Chairperson

Carol V./Bev A., Co-Chairperson

Suzanne M., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—Conference

The Delegates were given access to e-Communities, the new on-line system to communicate with the Delegates.

The CLT recommended to the Board that meetings for the Selected Committees, Task Forces, Thought Forces, and Work Groups be held one day before the 2009 Conference.

Conference members submitted a total of 41 Chosen Agenda Items. The CLT created a Task Force, consisting of three Delegates, to combine similar Chosen Agenda Item topics in order to reduce the number of items. As a result of the Task Force’s work, 24 CAIs were presented to Conference members for voting.

In the second year of restructuring the Conference Committee to form the Conference Leadership Team, members of the Team agreed that the new structure was efficient and working well. In initial planning for the 2010 WSC, the Conference Leadership Team unanimously agreed on the 2010 Conference theme:

“Celebrate! Embrace the group conscience to expand our circle of hope—50 years of the World Service Conference”

INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION COMMITTEE

Zelda R./Judy A., Chairperson

Doris W./Penny R., Co-Chairperson

Marsha W., Associate Director of Membership Outreach—International

ZONAL MEETINGS

Germany

The WSO participated as a resource during the third European Zonal Meeting, hosted by the German General Service Office in Essen, Germany. The format of this three-day meeting was similar to the International Al-Anon General Services Meeting, as there were general sessions and workshops. An invitation to the meeting was extended to all European countries with an Al-Anon presence. Participants included Austria, Belgium (Flemish-speaking), Belgium (French-speaking), Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland (German-speaking), U.K. and Eire, and the World Service Office.

Argentina

The WSO also participated in the Ibero-American (Zonal) meeting hosted by the General Service Office in Buenos Aires. The main goal of this meeting is “Sharing service experiences and encouraging those Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries that did not have a structure to overcome the fear of creating one.” Universally, the countries reported a decrease in the number of groups by 50% from what they had 15 years ago. Each country discussed its structure. Participants in this meeting included representation from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, and Uruguay. The World Service Office participated as a resource.

TRANSLATION HIGHLIGHTS

Discovering Choices (SB-30 and FB-30) was translated into Spanish and French and will be available in 2010.

INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

SOUTH AFRICA

The General Service Office invited and paid for the Executive Director to attend the South Africa General Service Conference. As a part of his participation, the Executive Director did workshops on conflict resolution and strategic planning. Members voted to rotate their IAGSM Delegates and to find two Delegates for the 2010 IAGSM in Virginia Beach.

TURKEY AND HUNGARY

In addition to travel to Essen, Germany for the third European Zonal meeting, the Chairperson of the International Coordination Committee and Associate Director of Member Services—International traveled to Istanbul, Turkey and Kecskemet, Hungary and met with Al-Anon members in countries involved in Al-Anon/Alateen service.

During one of the two service meetings held in Istanbul over a two-day period, the World Service Office representatives were able to advise the members that the Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature currently produced in Turkey was not authorized by the World Service Office and the process to obtain reprint permission was explained.

The World Service Office last visited Hungary in 2005. Meetings held throughout this two-day visit in Kecskemet were aimed at discussions surrounding the translation and printing of Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature and the possible registration of an Al-Anon Information Service. Al-Anon members involved in service have formed a service board to service the 26 existing groups.

Also during this visit, two members from Serbia came to Hungary to meet with the World Service Office representatives. They reported there is currently one English-speaking group that meets once a week with four members. While they originally were considering reprint permission, they realized they don't have sufficient members to justify printing at this time.

All members who participated from each country expressed

their appreciation and indicated they found all service meetings educational, informative, and helpful.

U.K. AND EIRE

The Executive Director was invited to participate in U.K. and Eire's National Service Conference. All expenses for the Executive Director were paid by the General Service Office. The U.K. and Eire Board of Trustees asked that the Executive Director do a workshop on strategic planning and conflict resolution. In addition, the Executive Director also shared on the topic "unlimited abundance." The Conference voted to consider owning property on a 15-year trial, using the WSO's model.

The Executive Director noted that this trip was a very positive experience. The WSO received a letter from the U.K. and Eire Chairperson of the Board, thanking the Executive Director for his guidance and attendance.

TEAM—Together Empowering Al-Anon Members

The new TEAM events partner one or more Areas with the World Service Office (WSO) to create an innovative event designed to Together Empower Al-Anon Members. The events make better use of resources, and responsibilities are shared. TEAM events can be held before or after an existing event, such as an Assembly or Convention, or as a stand-alone activity.

Five TEAM events with six Areas participating have been confirmed for 2010. Each is a unique event that will be designed to meet the needs of local members.

New Mexico	May 1-2, 2010
Utah & Arizona	June 25-26, 2010
Kentucky	September 10, 2010
Connecticut	October 2-3, 2010
Minnesota North	October 1-2, 2010

GROUP SERVICES DEPARTMENT

ALATEEN

An Alateen chat meeting on the WSO Web site was tested with Alateens and Al-Anon Members Involved in Alateen Service (AMIAS) from Finland and the U.S. Ensuring the safety of those in attendance has been the primary goal, and WSO believes that the room is as safe as it can be. Sharings are screened by the certified AMIAS serving as the chat meeting Sponsors, and no personal information can be shared. Only the meeting Sponsors can initiate one-on-one contact with others in the room, and that contact is monitored. After the completion of final testing, the chat facility will be opened to all the Areas and General Service Offices (GSOs) in 2010.

The last two (of four) PowerPoint training modules for use in the Areas were completed. The four modules are "An Overview of Alateen Service," "The Alateen Meeting," "Alateen Events," and "Alateen Challenges." A guide was provided to Area Alateen Coordinators to facilitate customizing the modules with the Area's Requirements and process. The modules provide the Areas with additional flexibility in setting up training sessions. They can be customized and used in whole or in part, in one session or several.

In 2009, Group Services and Group Records staff collaborated to hold the first conference call focused on the Area Alateen process. The call focused on how Areas implement their Area

requirements at Alateen and Al-Anon events and how Areas provide on-going information to new members about the Area Alateen process. The Coordinators and Area Alateen Process Persons were added to e-Communities.

The number of AMIAS certified by the Areas continues to increase; the year-end total was 5,809.

GROUP RECORDS

A high number of new Al-Anon group registrations from evolving structures were received in the early spring 2009, resulting in an 8% increase of groups registered outside the WSO structure. The reasons for the increase are a combination of General Service Offices (GSOs) encouraging evolving structures to register, better communication, and pre-existing groups registering.

In 2009, the WSO continued to receive about 10% of new group registrations submitted with group names that didn't meet WSO registration criteria. The majority of unacceptable names implied affiliation with outside entities; others implied a purpose that was not Al-Anon's purpose, were deemed to be not welcoming, or contained language that could be offensive. The groups were contacted and referred to the "Groups at Work" and "Policy Digest" sections of the *2006-2009 Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual*. They were encouraged to register with a name in adherence with Al-Anon policy. Most groups readily

complied; a few groups agreed to take a new name temporarily until a discussion could be held at the Policy Committee; one member starting a group decided not to start the meeting rather than comply.

The total number of registered groups in 2009 is 25,161.

U.S. Al-Anon: 13,114

U.S. Alateen: 1,023

Canada Al-Anon: 1,377

Canada Alateen: 84

Overseas Al-Anon: 8,899

Overseas Alateen: 664

Seventy-eight electronic meetings are currently registered, including 48 Internet and 30 telephone meetings—60 are English, seven Spanish, three French, four German, and one each in Portuguese, Estonian, Italian, and Danish.

The first New Group Records Coordinator Conference Call was held on February 21, 2009. The focus of the call was to reinforce the importance of maintaining accurate group information and to identify and discuss problems frequently found when submitting Al-Anon Group Registration/Change Forms; 19 new Group Records Coordinators participated in the call.

Beginning May 2009, a list of the Area World Service Committee Members was sent electronically, twice a year, to the Area Delegates, concurrent with the bi-annual Group printout schedule sent to Group Records Coordinators. This additional report is to assist the Area in providing updated Area World Service Committee members' information on a regular basis.

MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH DEPARTMENT

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Ric B., Chairperson; Suzanne M., Coordinator, 2010 and 2013; and Barbara O., Co-Coordinator, 2010 and 2013

2010 A.A. International Convention, San Antonio, Texas, July 1-4, 2010

Following a discussion regarding modeling Al-Anon's participation at the A.A. International after A.A.'s participation at the Al-Anon International in Pittsburgh in 2008, the WSO agreed to not have a theme for Al-Anon's participation at the 2010 Convention.

Texas East, the hosting Area, selected an Al-Anon Host Committee Chairperson and Co-Chairperson. The Host Committee Chair appointed Subcommittee Chairs.

Registration forms were sent to the following: Al-Anon groups, AISs, AIS/LDCs, and GSOs. A handful of Al-Anon members contacted the WSO upset that the WSO gave the Al-Anon groups' current mailing addresses to A.A.'s mailer. Following research of the WSO's procedures for past A.A. International Conventions, it was confirmed that this was the same process the WSO followed previously.

2013 AL-ANON INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA, JULY 5-7, 2013

Following satisfactory negotiations, the Executive Director signed the License Agreement between the Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre (VCEC) and the WSO. The Convention will occupy meeting space in the West (new) building, which includes an exhibit hall to hold the Big Meetings.

All hotel contracts were negotiated and signed.

The Coordinator and Co-Coordinator attended the opening of the expansion of Vancouver's Convention Centre. The trip, which Tourism Vancouver paid for, was a valuable experience. The decision to hold the International Convention in Vancouver was based on architectural drawings and an unfinished building; now staff has obtained first-hand knowledge of the function space. Staff also had the opportunity to continue building working relationships with the hotels, Convention Centre, and Tourism Vancouver.

The Housing Company agreement was reviewed and signed. The dorm contract has not been signed yet as the contract submitted by the University of British Columbia (UBC) was substantially different from the terms previously discussed.

BUSINESS SERVICES

We are currently using the iMIS inventory system to monitor English, French, and Spanish literature levels and re-order points.

We began using the modified iMIS on-line e-store module early in 2009. This shopping cart now interfaces with our order entry system and does not require the manual updating as needed with the previous on-line store.

We began using an electronic funds transfer module in our accounting system for U.S. and Canadian volunteers' travel expenses.

We have replaced Information Exchange with e-Communities for all participating members. Additional groups are being discussed.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Frank R., Chairperson

David Zach, Director of Business Services

The Finance Committee meets monthly and reports to the Executive Committee immediately following the Finance meeting. During the Conference, the Finance Committee reports directly to the Board.

Responsibilities of the Finance Committee include monitoring expenses, cash flow, aligning the budget of estimated income and expenses, and recommending that the Board of Trustees set aside funds in reserve when appropriate. The Committee's oversight ensures that we remain solvent.

The Committee reviews the financial feasibility of proposed projects not already included in the budget, taking into consideration the goals and desired outcomes, cost-effectiveness, timing, and the relationship to the Strategic Plan. Additionally, it sets prices for new or existing literature. The Committee reports those actions to the Executive Committee. Other routine functions included:

- Approval of the quarterly Appeal letters.
- Review of handouts on previous year's contributions received from the U.S. and Canada for distribution at the World Service Conference.
- Recommendation of the equalized expense amount to send a Delegate to the World Service Conference to the Board of Trustees.
- Review and submission of recommendations for the Investment Strategy Goals to the Board of Trustees for approval.
- Review of each department's budget with the Director of that service in preparing the Preliminary 2010 Budget for presentation to the Board of Trustees in January.

Other non-routine actions included:

- Recommendation to the Board of Trustees that the Preliminary Budget be sent to World Service Conference members after the auditors have completed their field work.
- The Committee created a list of terms intended for Board members to use in order to understand the WSO's financial status and financial statements.
- Conference Procedure for Managing Excess Bequest Funds was presented to the 2009 WSC.
- The Finance Committee assumed the responsibility of the Investment Committee for a three-year trial period.
- An Investment Philosophy Statement was created. Our Investment Philosophy is one of growth and income with a moderate risk tolerance. The Board seeks to balance potential risks with higher potential growth and income. We believe equities are a significant portion of the account. The Finance Committee will meet with the advisor, at least semi-annually in June and December, to examine the status of our portfolio and determine whether the current mix of investments is meeting our goals. A formal review of the investment manager will occur at least every five years, beginning in 2009.
- An Investment Manager Evaluation Form was developed to evaluate the investment firm.
- The Finance Committee created new Goals and Objectives to anticipate future needs. Further development of these Goals and Objectives, including Action Plans, will continue.
- A Finance Presentation was approved for use at TEAM events.

ADDENDUM TO THE 2009 ANNUAL REPORT

Al-Anon/Alateen Internationally

AFRICA

South Africa: A representative from the General Service Office reported they were able to accomplish a Public Outreach project involving nine African countries. The goal of the project was to deliver Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature to remote areas by courier. Also, as a result of their Lone Member efforts, the General Service Office has successfully connected with contacts located in Kenya, Zambia, and Botswana. The Executive Director attended their Conference, provided input regarding their Alateen Safety Guidelines, and met with the new National President and Board of Trustees.

EUROPE

Austria: A representative from the service structure reported that members voted to establish a national service structure at their fall service meeting.

Belgium (Flemish-speaking): The General Service Office advised that their Literature Committee has continued to be busy with revising literature. This is being done in cooperation with the Netherlands.

Belgium (French-speaking): At the European Zonal meeting, the representatives advised that their General Service Office is not functioning consistently at this time. Currently, all working at the General Service Office are volunteers. The representatives advised that the General Service Office is experiencing financial hardship, and they have not been able to send a representative to the International Al-Anon General Service Meeting.

Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly the Soviet Union): In addition to being an Al-Anon Information Service, the office in Moscow has now become a Literature Distribution Center (AIS/LDC).

Denmark: The IAGSM Delegate advised that ideas from their attendance at the 2008 International Al-Anon General Services Meeting (IAGSM) were used in their annual service meeting.

Finland: Alateens and their Alateen Group Sponsors participated in a test with the WSO for the new Alateen chat meetings.

France: A representative from the General Service Office advised that their office agreed to participate in a public outreach activity sponsored by the French government.

Germany: The General Service Office hosted the European Zonal Meeting. The various topics discussed during the meeting included Alateen, translation, and reprinting of Conference Approved Literature. There were 17 structures represented, including the World Service Office. Lithuania and Slovenia attended this meeting for the first time.

Greece: The English-speaking contact informed the World Service Office that they are translating *Paths to Recovery* (B-24). The WSO was also advised that the members doing the translation are very excited about this project, as they believe the Concept sharings will be very helpful for the membership as a whole in Greece.

Iceland: In response to a question of whether Al-Anon should use an A.A. translation and only change one word in Step Twelve, the WSO responded, yes, the Al-Anon translation should be the same as the A.A. translation. The World Service Office does not hold the copyright for the Twelve Steps. Therefore Al-Anon translations should be the same as the A.A. translation. The only word change in the Al-Anon translation would be found in Step Twelve.

Hungary: World Service Office representatives met with members from four cities to discuss questions surrounding service and the process needed to obtain authorization from the World Service Office to translate and sell Al-Anon Conference Approved Literature.

Italy: The General Service Office sent a representative to attend the 49th World Service Conference. A representative was also sent to the European Zonal Meeting. The General Service Office reported a slight increase in group registrations.

Lithuania: Two representatives participated in the European Zonal Meeting.

Netherlands: The General Service Office moved to a new location and reported this has been positive move for their finances.

Poland: The General Service Office has completed the translation and printing and sent the World Service Office two copies of the following literature pieces in Polish:

Lois' Story (P-11)

Al-Anon Sharings from Adult Children (P-47)

Dear Mom and Dad (P-67)

Alateen Program Card (M-18)

Portugal: The General Service Office moved to a new location to help keep financial costs down. There are currently 19 Al-Anon groups registered.

Serbia: Two members from Serbia's only Al-Anon group met with World Service Office representatives during the trip to Hungary. As a result, the WSO now has an Al-Anon contact in Serbia.

Slovenia: Two representatives attended the European Zonal Meeting. Currently, representatives are working on translating materials, such as guidelines to help strengthen the groups.

Spain: The General Service Office sent two representatives to the European Zonal Meeting. Another representative was sent to participate in the Ibero-American meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Although there has been a decline in groups, the General Service Office reports that members are still actively involved with the service structure.

Sweden: The General Service Office sent a representative to the European Zonal Meeting.

Switzerland (French-speaking): The General Service Office reported that the World Service Office visit in 2008 energized their public outreach and service efforts in 2009. They report the groups have remained steady, as there are 30 Al-Anon and two Alateen groups, which is unchanged from 2008.

Switzerland (German-speaking): The General Service Office sent two representatives to attend the European Zonal Meeting.

Turkey: The World Service Office met with 25 to 30 members during a visit to Istanbul; various topics were discussed. Turkey currently has 26 groups registered with one Alateen group. Since the visit, an Al-Anon Information Service was registered with the World Service Office. The following three pamphlets have been translated and printed in Turkey:

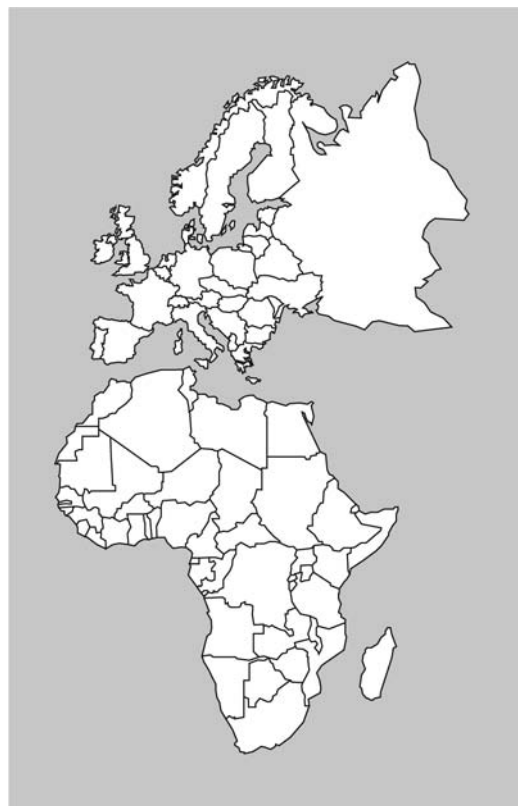
Guide for the Family of the Alcoholic (P-9)

Purposes and Suggestions (P-13)

This Is Al-Anon (P-32)

Groups at Work (P-24) has also been translated.

U.K. & Eire: A representative from the United Kingdom and Eire GSO notified the WSO they were impressed with the podcasts on the Public Outreach Web site; they are suggesting that their Lone Members use the podcasts as a resource. The General Service Office sent a representative to the 49th General Service Conference.



ASIA

India: The trial national service structure launched a national Public Outreach Web site. The decision was made to move the Trial National Structure Office to Mumbai.

Japan: The General Service Office informed the World Service Office that service activity on behalf of Al-Anon is growing positively, based on their public outreach efforts. A vocal minority was informed that only the Japanese General Service Office is authorized to print and distribute literature.

Korea: The General Service Office reported that activities after their annual

Service Meeting in May have remained steady for the 60 Al-Anon groups and three Alateen groups in their service structure.



AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

Australia: The General Secretary reported that highlights from their Annual Meeting that took place May 2-3, 2009, included the Board of Trustees appointment of the first out of town Board of Trustee member for a trial period of three years. Additionally a decision was made to follow the World Service Office model of having only one Sustaining Trustee, the General Secretary.

New Zealand: A representative from the General Service Office advised that the

Conflict Resolution Workshop presented during the 2008 World Service Conference was shared with members at an Area event and was received favorably.

NORTH AND CENTRAL AMERICA

Mexico: The General Service Office sent a representative to the 49th World Service Conference. In response to an inquiry regarding whether Public Outreach materials could be adapted to fit the service structure, the World Service Office advised the General Service Office that this is permissible for national service structures.

Costa Rica: The General Service Office advised that their national conference held December 4-6, 2009 was successful and they look forward to following up with projects for 2010. The General Service Office reported an increase of Al-Anon groups.

Cuba: A member involved in the national service structure advised that plans are underway for the national meeting that will take place in April 2010. Although communication outside of Cuba is not consistent, it was reported that Al-Anon in Cuba is continuing to function well.

Guatemala: The General Service Office informed the World Service Office that they would like to formally register the Al-Anon Trademarks for Guatemala. The World Service Office responded that the first step in this process is to research the costs for registering the three trademarks in two areas, goods and services in the name of AFG, USA. The World Service Office licenses only national service structures to use the trademarks through a letter of agreement.

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina: The General Service Office hosted the 2009 Ibero-American meeting in Buenos Aires. The countries sending representatives were Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Paraguay, Peru, Spain, Uruguay, and the World Service Office.

Bolivia: A representative reported that their July Conference was successful. At this time the service structure for Bolivia is still developing. There are currently 33 active groups registered with the World Service Office.

Brazil: The General Service Office advised that their national conference held April 1-4, 2009 was successful and accomplished much. Public outreach efforts have increased the visibility of the Al-Anon/Alateen name.

Chile: A representative involved in service advised that a successful workshop on the topic "Program for Beginners" was held in June. The purpose was to give members ideas to help when newcomers attend meetings.

Colombia: To assist with their discussion surrounding a possible restructuring of service roles within their General Service Office, the World Service Office shared experience regarding the roles of the Executive Committee and Executive Director. The General Service Office sent a representative to the Ibero-American meeting.

Ecuador: The groups agreed to support a national service structure; this action was approved by the World Service Office Board of Trustees on a trial basis.

El Salvador: The WSO received seven group registrations and a registration form for a new Al-Anon Information Service. This is a significant milestone for El Salvador, as in 2004, the national service structure was dissolved for financial reasons.

Paraguay: A General Service Office representative advised the Board is currently reviewing their by-laws. Plans include aligning their by-laws with the by-laws of Al-Anon Family Group Headquarters, Inc.

Peru: The General Service Office advised the Alateen Safety Guideline (SG-34) is being adapted for use within their service structure.

Venezuela: The General Service Office advised that a project proposal was approved by their 2009 Conference to move forward on the purchase of property for the General Service Office.



2010 CONFERENCE ATTENDEES

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Trustees at Large

Judy A.
Bev A.
Roger C.
Doreen D.
Mary G.
Vicki H.
Laurie K.
Mary Ann R.
Harriet T.

Regional Trustees

Sandie D., Canada Central
Sharon H., Canada West
JP M., US Southeast
Frank R., US Northeast
Penny R., US Northwest
Karen R., US Southwest
Carol V., US North Central
Doris W., US South Central

Executive Committee

Judith P., Chairperson
Ric B., Executive Director
Mary Ann R., Board Chairperson (Ex-officio)
Frank R., Treasurer
Mary G., Policy Chairperson
Catherine J., Member at Large
Liz W.S., Member at Large
Robert S., Staff member

Non-Trustee Committee Chairpersons

Linda B., ECRPM Chairperson**

World Service Office Staff

Ric B., Executive Director
David Zach, Director of Business Services*
Barbara O., Director of Member Services
Robert S., Director of Communication Services
Claire R., Associate Director of Communications—
Professionals
Mary Lou M., Associate Director of Group Services—
Alateen and Special Needs
Marsha W., Associate Director of Membership
Outreach—International
Pat Q., Associate Director of Communications—
Media
Suzanne M., Associate Director of Membership
Outreach—Conference
Tom C., Associate Director of Communications—
Literature

International Representatives

Peter A., New Zealand**
María Del Carmen T., Mexico**

Cultural Competency Consultant

John Colon*

Guest

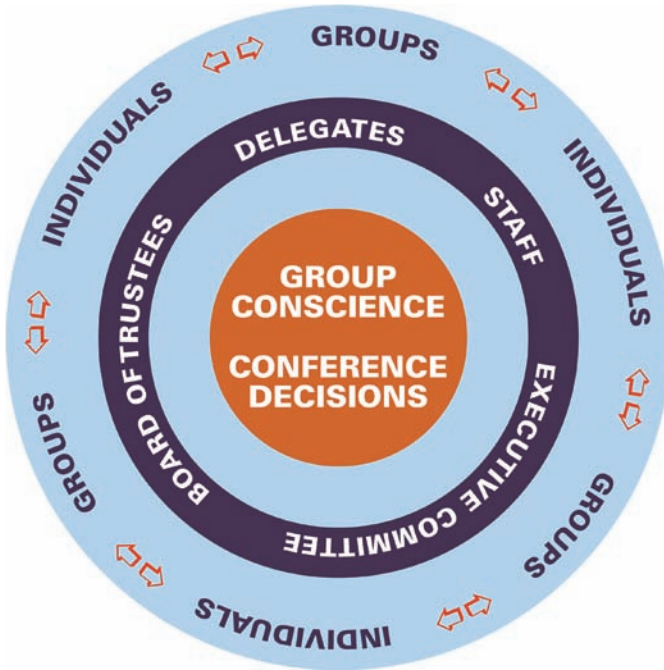
El N., Southeast Regional Trustee for A.A.*

AREA DELEGATES

Vickie C., Alabama
Sharon B., Alaska
Jane H., Alberta/Northwest Territories
Cecilia K., Arizona
Cindy H., Arkansas
Shirley T., British Columbia/Yukon
John S., California North
Sandie E., California South
Teri M., Colorado
Gina R., Connecticut
Connie D., Delaware
Terry F., Florida North
Linda S., Florida South
Vicki L., Georgia
Kay R., Hawaii
Berta R., Idaho
Ramona C., Illinois North
Marcy M., Illinois South
Theresa D., Indiana
Lorraine R., Iowa
Charla C., Kansas
Linda M., Kentucky
Clif B., Louisiana
Melissa F., Maine
Louise R., Manitoba
Jeannette M., Maritime Provinces
Charlie S., Maryland/District of Columbia
John P., Massachusetts
Debbie K., Michigan
Elaine L., Minnesota North
Meagan M., Minnesota South
Daphne F., Mississippi
Richard B., Missouri

Cindy C., Montana
Kerri K., Nebraska
Judy K., Nevada
Marilee P., Newfoundland/Labrador
Dotty B., New Hampshire
Paul G., New Jersey
Chris M., New Mexico
Elaine R., New York North
Marcia B., New York South
Patsy A., North Carolina/Bermuda
Connie B., North Dakota
Sandra F., Ohio
Jane S., Oklahoma
Leona W., Ontario North
Claire D., Ontario South
Bette R., Oregon
Christine F., Pennsylvania
Esther M., Puerto Rico
Jocelyne L., Quebec East
Micheline B., Quebec West
Barbara L., Saskatchewan
Linda R., South Carolina
Judy S., South Dakota
Cindy H., Tennessee
Rosie M., Texas East
Cindy K., Texas West
Norma D., Utah
Anne S., Vermont
Phyllis M., Virginia
Magdalena E., Washington
Marti S., West Virginia
Cheryl A., Wisconsin
Judy G., Wyoming

The Paths to Group Conscience



**Member to Member
Group to Group**



**Member to Group to
Trusted Servant**



**Trusted Servant to
Trusted Servant**



Carrying the Message Back